3.5 UPDATE · EXTRA COMICS · FREE POSTER

DRAGON®

SINNER OR SAINT

CAN YOU BE REDEEMED?

- DAEMONS
- DEMONS
- DEVILS

ALIEN ASSASSINS

INSIDE LOOK

PAGE 52

PALADINS OF GREYHAWK®

WIELD HOLY POWER

PAGE 96

NEW WAYS TO PLAY

COMBAT ACTION OPTIONS

100% OFFICIAL

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

by glumag

pizza punishing

DRAGON® MAGAZINE

Group Publisher: **Johnny L. Wilson**
Editor-in-Chief: **Jesse Decker**
Art Director: **Lisa Chido**
Associate Editor: **Matthew Sernett**
Associate Editor: **Stacie Magelssen**
Living Greyhawk Editor: **Erik Mona**
Editorial Assistance: **Penny Williams**
Circulation Director: **Pierce Watters**
Director of Prod. & Manufacturing: **John Dunn**
Prepress Manager: **Matt Beals**
Senior Production Designer: **Theresa Cummins**
Ad Traffic Coordinator: **Dawnelle Miesner**

Contributing Artists

Jason Engle, Phil Foglio, Todd Harris, John Kovalic, Mike May, Cara Mitten, Tony Moseley, Jake Parker, Wayne Reynolds, Marc Sasso, Stanley Shaw, Arnie Swekel, David Wahlstrom, Christina Wald, Jonathan Wayshak, Aaron Williams,

Contributing Authors

Eric Cagle, Andy Collins, Monte Cook, Gary Gygax, Gary Holian, Clifford Horowitz, Michael Mearls, Ed Stark, Chris Thomasson, Wil Upchurch, JD Wiker, Penny Williams, Skip Williams

PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC
3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110
Bellevue, WA 98007

Chief Executive Officer
Lisa Stevens
President
Johnny L. Wilson
Director of Marketing and Operations
Mary Franklin
Technical Director
Vic Wertz
Corporate Administrator
Wailam Wilson

Dragon (USPS 318-790) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 3245 146th Place SE, Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007, United States of America. (ISSN# 1062-2101) Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO Dragon, P.O. Box 469107, Escondido, CA 92046.
©2002 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

No part of this magazine may be reproduced (except for review purposes) without the prior written consent of the publisher. Material published herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Paizo Publishing, LLC, its employees, or its editorial staff, who are not liable for opinions expressed herein. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies that publish those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. Trademarks related to the Dungeons & Dragons brand, including *Dragon*, *Dungeon*, and D&D are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and are used under license from Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a division of Hasbro, Inc.

BACK ISSUES: www.paizo.com or call 425-289-1140
SUBSCRIPTIONS/CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Contact Publishers Creative Systems at **dragon@pcspublink.com** or call 1-800-395-7760.
Although we accept subscriptions to prison addresses, delivery is subject to the discretion and/or whim of prison personnel. If you have not received a magazine or premium, please consult with your Mail Room authorities. This publisher is not responsible for non-delivery.

ADVERTISING: Contact *Dragon*'s Group Publisher, Johnny Wilson, at (425) 289-1344. All ads are subject to approval by Paizo Publishing, LLC, which reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason. Advertisers and/or agencies of advertisers agree not to hold Paizo Publishing, LLC liable for any loss or expense from alleged wrongdoing that may arise out of the publication of such advertisements.

Northeastern Advertising Representatives: Sig or Scott Buchmayr, Buchmayr Associates, 137 Rowayton Avenue, Rowayton, CT 06853, (203) 855-8834.

DISTRIBUTION: National and international distribution is provided by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646. Tel: (201) 634-7400. Fax: (201) 634-7499.

Open Game Content: Unless otherwise noted, this Paizo Publishing, LLC product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 System License, please visit **www.wizards.com/d20**.

Printed in the U.S.A.

GAME ROOM

8 Wyrm's Turn
Nothing makes a D&D player happier than a new character.

10 Scale Mail
Who will win the 5-sided die? Who likes open game content? Will the questions ever stop?

16 Up On a Soapbox
Get one up on the DM.

18 House Rules
Spontaneous casting for druids

ON THE COVER

A mainstay of D&D art since third edition released, Arnie Swekel graces the cover of *Dragon* for the first time.

FEATURES

20 Betraying Your Evil Nature
Sinner or saint? Temptation, redemption, and your character.

26 By Evil Bound
6 Daemons
6 Demons
6 Devils

44 Power Fantasy
Swing from chandeliers, throw a horse, and master other action-movie stunts.

52 Killing Cousins: Githzerai
Limbo's hit squads work behind the scenes to thwart githyanki and destroy the mindflayers.

60 Racial Variants
Customize the PC races and play any character from deep elves to desert dwarves.

66 Urban Traps
25 devious devices make any city a place to fear, a place to steal, and a place to adventure.

72 Revision Update
A first-hand account of the heavily debated damage reduction rules

76 Silicon Sorcery
A challenging encounter from one of the most popular D&D-related computer games

DRAGON® CONTENTS

Issue 306 · April 2003 Vol. XXVII · Number 11

WIZARDS' WORKSHOP

84, 92 **Nodwick**

86 **Zoogonia**

90 **Dork Tower**

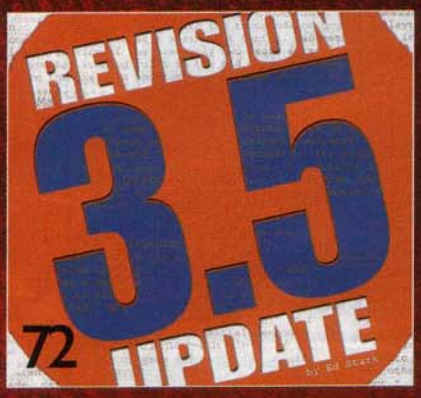
102 **DM's Toolbox**
Make players do what you want.

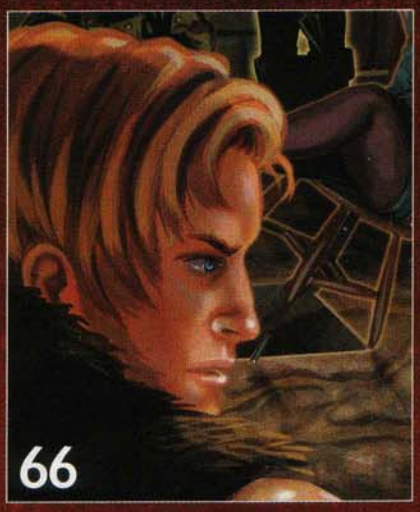
106 **Dungeoncraft**
Wrapping up city design

110 **Sage Advice**
Answers on magic and combat

113 **Advertiser Index**

114 **What's New**





LIVING GREYHAWK JOURNAL

94 **Campaign News**
The skinny on the section's new home, meta-regions, and more.

96 **Paladins of Greyhawk**
As a special treat for our last *DRAGON* installment, we feature feats and historical notes on the holy warriors of the Flanaess.

Living Greyhawk Moves Again

If you've kept up with the changes in *Dungeon/Polyhedron*, you're probably already aware that *Dragon's* best friend in the gaming industry has gone monthly. Because of this changing schedule, super-editor Erik "how many magazines do you want me to edit?" Mona is moving the *Living Greyhawk Journal* into the pages of *Polyhedron* and out of *Dragon*. Not only does this lower the DC for Erik's Sanity Check to 88, it makes *Poly* the go-to magazine for all RPGA content. We wish him and the rest of the *Dungeon/Polyhedron* staff the best of luck with the new monthly format. Now go check out the preview on page 14.

Conventions

The summer convention season approaches, and if you haven't yet thought of taking a trip to Origins, GenCon, or one of the other great conventions this year, go make a reservation. The staff of *Dragon* and *Dungeon/Polyhedron*, along with the rest of the Paizo crew, have put together a series of writing seminars, playtest opportunities, and a unique brand of booth mayhem that we'll bring to both Origins and GenCon. If you can make it to the cons, be sure to stop by the booth or drop in on a seminar.

Get the Message

As those of you who frequent the message boards probably already know, Wizards of the Coast has removed the message board devoted to *Dragon* from its community pages. This was part of the agreement laid out back when Paizo (the company that now publishes *Dragon Magazine*) was being formed, so it comes as no surprise. The change shouldn't make it any harder to get in touch with the magazine staff (or anyone at Paizo for that matter). You can send letters that you'd like to see included in the magazine to **scalemail@paizo.com**. Or, if you want to participate in a message board discussion about the magazine, just head over to the ENworld forums (**www.enworld.org**) and put your magazine-related post in the general forum. The staff here participates in the fan forums as often as possible, and if you put the word [Dragon] in the title of your thread, we'll be sure to see it.

WYRM'S **TURN**

FROM THE EDITOR
DEAD AGAIN

It seems like every time Rob dies, I die too, and silly Chris Thomasson has killed us again. At the beginning of the playtests for the *Dungeon* adventure path, I was playing a fierce halfling druid, mainly to try out the improved animal companion rules in D&D 3.5. Hallan (the druid) was a fun character to play; he made a good scout, possessed decent spellcasting abilities, and had a fair chance of hitting foes. Because he was small, he didn't do a tremendous amount of damage, but he and his riding dog companion Fergus were usually the last folks standing in a fight. While I played Hallan, Rob Head (Paizo's new webmaster) played a goblin thief named Meechee, who led the way into the final encounter in "Life's Bazaar." One long and difficult fight later, Meechee, Hallan, and Fergus all lay dead.

Less than a week later, Rob came back with a new character, a barbarian with "so many hit points" that Rob claimed "he was sure to survive." I rejoined the group with a stoic dwarf fighter/cleric, a low-Charisma servant of Fharlanghn that not only promised to be fun to roleplay but also took the party another step closer to the all-cleric party that Matt Sernett (*Dragon* Associate Editor) and I continue to threaten Chris with. The first fight went just fine, and the new characters seemed effective, reinforcing our beliefs that the new party was more capable than the group that included Hallan and Meechee and that Chris wouldn't get us again. That belief lasted about 15 minutes into the next session when Rob charged his barbarian into a fight, provoking three attacks of opportunity in the process.

When Rob's barbarian charged into that fight, I should have seen the pattern and fled right then. Of course, I was too caught up in the encounter to realize what was about to happen, and by the time Rob's barbarian died, it was too late to get away. In that same combat action, before my 4th-level dwarf cleric could back away from the fight, Thomasson was cackling gleefully and asking whether or not a '30' confirmed a critical hit against my character.

Um . . . yeah, that hit.

From there, it was straight to negative 15 hit points and death number two for the campaign. Poo.

It's the threat of lasting consequences like character death and level drain that make the game fun, and I'm never happy in campaigns where the DM bends the rules to avoid PC deaths, in campaigns too easy to provide a credible fear of character death, or even campaigns with easy access to *true resurrection.* (To borrow a phrase made famous by *Knights of the Dinner Table,* I believe in letting the dice fall where they may.) But even knowing and believing in the importance of these consequences, character death sucks, and I was a bit bummed . . . for all of about 15 minutes.

Then I was excited, looking forward to the next session, and reminded again about one of the things I like best about D&D: new characters. I've said that combat is my favorite part of the game often enough, but making a brand new character is somewhere near the top. Rolling ability scores, picking feats and skills, suiting the character up with equipment, coming up with some basic tactics, thinking up catch phrases, and outlining a background is almost an evening's entertainment in itself, and since I had what was at the time a hot-off-the-press copy of *Savage Species,* I got to make my first ever minotaur character, adding to the fun.

Editor-in-Chief

To inquire about subscriptions, email **dragon@pcspublink.com** or call 1 (800) 395-7760. To contact *Dragon* about editorial concerns, email **scalemail@paizopublishing.com**. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

Westeros Campaign
by Wolfgang and Shelly Baur
Visit the blood and pageantry of Westeros, the world created by George R.R. Martin in his best-selling series, "A Song of Ice and Fire." From the brothers of the Night's Watch to the treachery of House Lannister, Westeros is a world of epic scope filled with danger, deceit, and ancient secrets. This special setting includes a poster-size map of the continent of Westeros, the tools you need to adventure in this amazing world, and a detailed look at the setting's most prominent characters, organizations, and noble houses. Plus, an exclusive interview with George R.R. Martin.

The Silverstrike Guild
by Christopher Campbell
A band of aerial knights dedicated to freedom and equality, the Silver Strike guild features new tools for flying mounts and characters, advice on including aerial combat in your campaign, and new character options for anyone who wants to take to the sky.

Risen Dead #2
by Gwendolyn Kestrel
This issue features a sequel to one of last year's most praised articles, and one of the magazine's first survey-driven articles. When readers voted on the undead that they'd most like to see made into templates, they chose the bodak, ghoul, ghast, and scion of Kyuss.

3.5 Revision Update
by Ed Stark
The release of D&D 3.5 draws ever nearer. Get the latest on the most important RPG products to be released this year and an early chance to see preview art of the new books.

Plus other great features and articles.

SCALE **MAIL**

READERS TALK BACK
CONES, D&D 3.5, AND THE OGL

Sealed for Your Protection

My DM literally has all your *DRAGON* magazines, as well as *DUNGEON*, and a slew of other gaming periodicals. The problem is that he places them in nice plastic bags with cardboard and refuses to damage them at all, even to the point of removing the incredibly useful items such as your newly released cone templates. Is there any way you can put those items into a PDF format for download and use?

So how, you may ask, do we figure out our area effects without your wonderfully colorful templates? I take solid electrical wire (not braided) and bend it into an outline of your patterns. It's time consuming, but it allows me to place the pattern around our figures such that it doesn't cover or (heaven forbid!) knock over someone's carefully painted miniature. This also allows us to leave long-duration effects like *glitter dust* on the table and not have to move any figures to place it. To add to this, I use a yellow wire for *glitter dust*, red for *fireball*, and white for cone spells.

Maybe I need to get out more?

Thanks, and I love your magazine, although I didn't start reading until issue #287.

Tony Pine
Address Withheld

Everyone on the DRAGON staff agrees that we should sell something online, whether it's complete electronic back issues, compilations of specific articles, or extras like our cone templates. Soon, our newly hired web expert will sort all those tentative plans out, and we'll make an official announcement. Until then, I point out that you could easily acquire the cone templates and other extras that we put in the magazine by "buying your own copy." As strange as that might sound, it's our recommended way to get access to the contents of the magazine. But that's not to say that you shouldn't spend some time convincing your DM to get a second subscription. Tell him that he needs one for game use and one for the collection.

Jesse Decker
Editor-in-Chief

Compendiumonium

Does the release of the 3.5 *Player's Handbook* mean we can expect new books for our favorite classes with additional prestige classes? Even though the shifter and the weapon master are cool, more prestige classes and dedicated paths help out those of us new to the game to flesh out a character fairly swiftly. Perhaps individual books for the separate classes . . . you know, one dedicated to paladins, another dedicated solely to druids, and so on.

Might I make a suggestion for an additional compendium? I really enjoy the articles that flesh out guilds that PCs can be a part of or fight against. I am currently running a tiefling rogue who is a member of the Gray Order described in *DRAGON* #299. Perhaps an "associations" book would be a nice addition to the library of every good player and DM. As such, I am seriously looking forward to the *Savage Species* book. It'll be nice to develop a human into a stronger half-dragon over time. I also like the idea of playing some outrageous creatures such as a slaad in addition to using the Nameless Legion suggestions and such in *DRAGON* # 304.

Y'all are brilliant!

Jason Webb
South Jordan, UT

We've been using the revised versions of the rules here in the office for nearly a year, and none of the supplemental material that we've accumulated since third edition's release has become obsolete. The characters in Chris Thomasson's Shackled City playtest (the Shackled City is DUNGEON's new Adventure Path series of adventures) still aim for prestige classes from Sword and Fist, *use magic armor from Green Ronin's* Plot & Poison, *and grab*

To inquire about subscriptions, email dragon@pcspublink.com or call 1 (800) 395-7760. To contact *DRAGON* about editorial concerns, email scalemail@paizopublishing.com. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

material from other D&D and d20 supplements that line our bookshelves. We can't spill the beans about what the folks at Wizards of the Coast have in store for fans beyond what's in their current product catalog, but it's safe to say that the material that you've got now will still be useful with the updated D&D 3.5.

For a more detailed answer to this question, check out the "Revision Update" articles by D&D Design Manager Ed Stark in recent issues.

Jesse Decker

Fighting Men

What is going on here? I'm a soldier serving is the US Army at the speartip of US Forces in Korea. Every day since January 1st of 2003, I have inspected the magazine racks in our PX stores for the latest issue.

Have the Harpers stopped the shipment of *DRAGON Magazines* to the "Land of the Morning Calm" (Korea)? Are the North Koreans afraid I might use the arcane knowledge gained from *DRAGON Magazine* to stop their development of nuclear weapons? Or, did someone open a planar portal that sucked *DRAGON Magazine's* print shop to another plane of existence (if so, send me their new email address)?

P.S. I'd like to see more articles on the *Neverwinter Nights* PC game such as tips for developing your own module or even a CD in the issue of approved modules for the game. Thanks!

Thor Sadler
US Army

Major Thor Sadler is the son of Barry Sadler. Sgt. Barry Sadler recorded the number one selling song in 1966, The Ballad of the Green Berets. *He also wrote a best-selling series of military fantasy novels about Casca, The Eternal Warrior. Apparently, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree, and we here at* DRAGON *are happy to support the Sadlers' legacy of interest in fantasy and our troops around the world. Besides, who can resist a request from a guy named Thor? The* DRAGONS *are coming.*

Matthew Sernett
Associate Editor

Make a Cone a Cone

I feel that any templates for spells or other area effects should have a realistic shape, rather than conform to the examples put forth in the *Player's Handbook.* While the *Player's Handbook* examples make it easy to decide without an aid whether a potential target is in the area of effect on a grid, any template should be similar to those provided in the 2nd edition *Battlesystem: Skirmishes* book, where the cut-out templates are shaped like actual cones, spheres, and so on. This way, the spellcaster is not limited by the grid map and can instead direct the effect in whatever direction she desires. Any grid-squares included or intersected by the template should be considered to be in the area of affect.

Jarrad Richards
London, UK

So, we could make the cone effect of spells actually be a cone? That's weird.

Jesse Decker

Open Wide

I was thrilled to see some open gaming content in issue #304. It's perfect material for open content: a new system for doing things (in this case, prestige races). This is how the game system is supposed to evolve. We can all test this, and if it works out well enough, hopefully we'll see it eventually in an official product from Wizards of the Coast.

You know, I wrote you a previous letter on the topic. I sure do hope you address the subject some day. I think all the content in *DRAGON* should be open, and the idea that open gaming content would destroy *DRAGON* is ludicrous. I don't think you can make that statement without backing it up. Everything should be open game content!

Jason Smith
Heber City, UT

As I made the comment, I'll try to explain my reasoning.

Roleplaying game companies make parts of their products open game content because they must if they want to put the d20 logo on their product. The d20 logo is how they advertise to the public that their products are compatible with D&D, so they have good motivation to make part or all of the products open content.

DRAGON *isn't required to make any part of the magazine open game content. It is an official D&D product, and Wizards of the Coast owns all the material in* DRAGON *after it's printed. Wizards of the Coast may take any of the game content from* DRAGON *and*

CAPTION CONTEST

What's so funny? Why, you are! So send your caption for this cartoon to **Caption/DRAGON Magazine, 3245 146th PL SE Suite 110, Bellevue, WA 98007** by May 1st, and be sure to write "issue #303" somewhere on your entry. Your caption will undergo rigorous testing by the editors, and if it passes, it just might be printed in an upcoming issue. There's no need to cut up your magazine. If you want to include the drawing, send in a photocopy.

To inquire about subscriptions, email dragon@pcspublink.com or call 1 (800) 395-7760. To contact *DRAGON* about editorial concerns, email scalemail@paizopublishing.com. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

DUNGEON #98

OUR FIRST MONTHLY ISSUE!

Flood Season
By James Jacobs

The second installment in the Adventure Path: Shackled City comes to you exclusively in *Dungeon* Magazine. As rains begin to fall and the waters of the city's central lake begin to rise, Cauldron grows restless. The churches haven't prepared for flooding this year, and to top it off, the high priest of St. Cuthbert is missing. It's up to the PCs to discover his fate and save Cauldron before the flood waters become deadly. A D&D Adventure Path: Shackled City adventure for 4th-level PCs.

Wings, Spikes, and Teeth
By Brian Marsden

En route to their next adventure, the PCs discover that something has been encouraging a pride of mountain lions to venture out of their normal territory and into the lowlands. People have started to disappear, and whatever force is responsible for encouraging this atypical behavior must be stopped. A D&D Side Trek for 8th-level PCs.

Gluttony
By J. Bradley Schell

Farmers and livestock alike have been found drained of blood. Could a vampire be on the loose? The PCs must uncover this mystery quickly before more innocents are slain by whatever bloodthirsty fiend is preying on them. A D&D Side Trek for 4th-level PCs.

Polyhedron

Poly gets a new format as *Dungeon/Polyhedron* goes monthly! Keep up with the RPGA Network in the *Living Greyhawk Journal*, fight high-tech ninjas in Unusual Suspects, and travel to a galaxy far, far away.

POLYHEDRON #157

make it open content or add it to the system reference document. When we run open content in Dragon, *we do so because we used the open content of another company as the foundation for an article or because the rules set a necessary standard for the industry.*

If all the material in Dragon *was open content, a company could compile designed and edited game content into a single product to come out at the end of the year (or maybe quarterly). That company would have no costs to acquire and edit the material, it would not have to pay the other costs of employing editors and production staff for a year, and the product would likely be produced with black-and-white art on cheaper paper. The cost of producing such a product would be a great deal less than it costs Paizo to make a single issue of* Dragon. *The savvy d20 company that produced this huge product could put a price on it that was much cheaper than a subscription to* Dragon, *but consumers would get the same game content. This scenario gets worse if the d20 company instead decided to put such a product downloadable online for an even cheaper price or for free.*

It should be clear how it would hurt the magazine to have another company offering Dragon's *contents cheaper or for free. Add to this the fact that Paizo sells back issues and might soon sell PDF collections, and it should be even more obvious.*

Matthew Sernett

Although there are some good reasons to not make Dragon's *content completely open, I want to reiterate that you'll see more open content through the coming year. New rules systems are the best thing we can make open, and that's what we're going to focus on. For example, were we to run an article like the underwater rules that we ran last year, we'd certainly make it open content. (Updated underwater rules will be in the revised DMG, and therefore the SRD, so you'll have those as open content soon anyway.)*

Jesse Decker

Knight Chills

I work in an inner-city high school and as a former college gamer I have contact with several student gamers here at the school. Over break they rented a new movie called *Knight Chills* and were blown away! Basically, it is a Dungeons & Dragons movie that really captures the energy and fun of gaming. I rented it myself, and I think it has a neat supernatural twist and that the gaming scenes were great. They made me miss gaming so much! I asked the kids how they heard about it, and they said they just saw it at Family Video and took a chance because it had a review on the cover by Gary Gygax. Do you know about this movie? The only other movies that I know of that even touched gaming were that awful Tom Hanks movie and that part in E.T. The kids say they have never seen anything in any gaming magazine about it and wonder how it could be overlooked. Me too!

Just an FYI, and I hope to see more movies coming out that get it right!

Mrs. J. Rae
Address Withheld

Just to be clear, this is the same Knight Chills *in which one of the players of a roleplaying game commits suicide and comes back as the ghost of his character to kill the other members of his gaming group, right? Well, if it is, then* Knight Chills *already made an appearance in* Dragon. *As the movie's website gleefully points out, someone mentioned* Knight Chills *in "Scale Mail" from issue #256.*

When I asked in the last issue for references to D&D from pop culture, this wasn't exactly what I was hoping for, but we've got to start somewhere. If you know of any other instances of D&D mentioned in movies, in music, on television, or in weird places in print, send them to **scalemail@paizo.com** *with the title "D&D Pop Culture." We'll compile them, and if we have enough, we'll print a guide to all the strange places where gamers can get their fix.*

Matthew Sernett

5-Sided Winners

Gabriel Anderson
Matthew Belcher
Caroline Byford
Graham Carey
David Degregorio
Greg Draudt
John Ensworth
Chris Jameson
William Long
Ryan Scott Jones
Alexander F. Simkin

D

To inquire about subscriptions, email **dragon@pcspublink.com** or call 1 (800) 395-7760. To contact *Dragon* about editorial concerns, email **scalemail@paizopublishing.com**. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

BEST SHOTS
THE FOLLY OF PREDICTABILITY

by Gary Gygax

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

For how many issues was *DRAGON Magazine* called *The Dragon?*

Answer on page 18.

As I have stated before, much of my early adventuring in the realms of D&D was Dungeon Mastered by Rob Kuntz. It was in Rob's extensive dungeon complex that many of Mordenkainen's tribulations and triumphs occurred. Put yourself into that wizard's boots, then, as you continue reading. Imagine his delight when he and his party of henchmen, Bigby included, discovered a large hexagonal chamber in the center of which was a stone plinth with a huge, faceted diamond resting atop it. The entrance to this room was at the point where two of its walls met. Each of the walls had a large gate in its face, big panels of iron-bound oak. "Six exits? Unlikely," was the assessment made by Mordenkainen as he stood in the entryway. Most likely there would be guardians awaiting behind those valves, and they would be let loose as soon as any move was made towards the gem in the center—a prize sure to lure any avaricious dungeon delver to it.

Having spent much time reading and studying military history on all levels, the tactical included, the analysis Mordenkainen made encouraged him to move forward boldly. He reasoned that the guardian monsters of this place would be loosed successively. If the defenders attacked piecemeal, then he and his stalwart party had a very favorable chance of defeating each group. The assessment took only a few seconds, and with clear instructions as to readying weapons and spells, the advance into the chamber proceeded.

As expected, the first gate opened, and out came a large number of low-level guards. Before they could attack, the lot were slain with a ready *cloudkill*. When that happened, the next set of doors opened, and stronger guardian monsters issued forth. These too were soon laid low by spells. The third gate yawned, and yet more and stronger minions of the Dungeon Master poured into the chamber. Arrows and spells met them, and so that group joined their fellows as corpses littering the floor. Without a pause, the fourth portal gaped open, and still stronger monsters emerged to meet their end in much the same manner the lesser guardians had. Like clockwork the fifth set of valves parted, and with like precision the party of adventurers struck with spells and weapons. As that group succumbed, however, there real concern among Mordenkainen and his stalwarts. They were near the limit of their spell-casting capacity, and few arrows remained in the fighters' quivers. What was going to come forth from the sixth and last door?

The monster that rushed out was indeed a fell one, but a barrage of *magic missiles*, the last shafts, and then close combat with sword managed to slay the final guardian. It had been a near thing, that fight, but no adventurer was slain, and the huge diamond was gained, a gem worth half a million gold pieces. The exhausted party seized the stone and beat a hasty retreat, all well satisfied. That satisfaction did not extend to the DM, of course. The error in the "trap" became apparent. Successive shocks had not worked, because the attacking monsters had not been able to inflict any serious damage on the intruding party until the very last, while the arsenal of spells and weaponry the latter possessed had been just sufficient to deal with the groups meant to guard the gem.

"I should have sent the monsters out all at once," Rob said dejectedly.

"Right," I agreed. "Now watch my dice so Mordie and the rest of the lads can level up. With the experience from casting, kills, and the value of the diamond, they all have gained a level."

No further comment is necessary here. . . .

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER

WINNER

"Look . . . it's been a long day. Just take the stupid treasure."

Congratulations Amy Mamsiriwan!
Glen Burnie, MD

RUNNER-UP

"Are any of you, by chance, an optometrist?"

Chris Trost
Aloha, OR

2002 Gary Gygax. All rights reserved.

To inquire about subscriptions, email dragon@pcspublink.com or call 1 (800) 395-7760. To contact *DRAGON* about editorial concerns, email scalemail@paizopublishing.com. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

DRUID SUMMONERS
NATURE'S SPONTANEOUS ALLY

by Andy collins

In a typical long-term campaign, it's likely that your list of house rules starts running pretty long. Over the months and years, the DM and players craft new rules to handle peculiar rules situations. It's easily possible to have so many variant rules in your campaign that even the DM—much less the players—can't keep track of them. This situation is exacerbated by most groups' tendency to remember, rather than record, their house rules.

In the end, this creates a game that resembles an overgrown shrub: There are so many branches, shoots, and leaves that the game is in danger of choking itself on minutiae. The best solution for this situation is the same one that you'd use on the overgrown shrubbery: pruning. Take a good look at your house rules. If you haven't already written them all down, do so. Sit down—preferably with the whole group involved—and ask five questions about each of your house rules:

1) How important is the rule to your game? Is it something that affects the PCs directly, or have a number of encounters hinged on it? If not, you might want to consider if it's really worth the time and effort to remember and apply.

2) How often does the rule come up? If the house rule hasn't come up in play during the last half-dozen sessions or so, it's likely that no one would remember it even if the situation came up.

3) Does the rule solve the problem it's intended to solve? In many cases, simply looking at a house rule weeks or months later proves that the rule wasn't necessary.

4) Does the rule create more problems than it solves? In some cases, a house rule spawns even more house rules to deal with its effects.

5) Is there a simpler solution? It's easy to collect a bushel of minor house rules to handle a specific situation or group of related effects. Can you consolidate the house rules into a broader, more general rule instead?

Once you've answered all these questions, you're set to start being judicious about your House Rules. Try to answer these questions for your campaign when you review the house rule below.

A: KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Thirty-eight (issues #1 through #38)

House Rule: Druidic Summoners

One area where everyone likes to tinker is Chapter 3: Classes. From skill points per level to class skill lists to class features and spell lists, there are plenty of places for DMs to customize their campaign.

While most groups of adventurers count the cleric as their most valuable member, the druid rarely enjoys such a reputation. Part of the problem comes from a misunderstanding of the character's role—the druid can't simply replace the cleric in a typical party, since she can't hope to provide the necessary healing. It's best to view the druid as a "fifth member" of a party that already has a cleric, or as an integral part of a group that depends on more than one character for healing (such as a bard, paladin, or ranger, armed with cure wounds wands). Such a view allows a druid to better utilize his strengths.

That said, if the druids in your campaign need a bit more help, try using the rule described here. The model of "swappable" spells used by the cleric seems like an obvious option to explore. Allowing the druid to spontaneously cast *summon nature's ally* by converting a prepared spell of the same level gives her a clear (and quite potent) role in the party—providing support in whatever form necessary. Need another combatant? Summon a wolf or a bear. Need a scout? Conjure an eagle or an owl. And so on. The versatility of making *summon nature's ally* "swappable" provides the druid with a big power boost, as she quickly becomes the character who always has the right trick up her sleeve.

d20stuff.com
Your #1 stop for open source content on the web!
Feats • Magic Items • Gods • Riddles
NPCs • Spells • Campaign Settings
Skills • Equipment • Prestige Classes
Domains • Classes • Phobias • Articles
Races • Fighting Styles • Adventures
Come get your d20 stuff!

To inquire about subscriptions, email dragon@pcspublink.com or call 1 (800) 395-7760. To contact *Dragon* about editorial concerns, email scalemail@paizopublishing.com. Letters reproduced in the magazine may be edited for clarity and length. All letters must include your full name and home city. Due to time constraints and the volume of letters received, individual responses are not always possible.

Temptation and Redemption

Betraying Your Evil Nature

By Eric Cagle · Illustrated by Arnie Swekel

One of the most important aspects of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS is the struggle between good and evil. In most games, the lines are clearly drawn—monsters and those who wish to hurt others are evil, while the characters are the good guys, dedicated to stopping the forces of darkness. In other adventures, however, the line sometimes becomes blurred.

A group of characters might need to make agonizing choices that force even good characters to do or say things that they normally wouldn't. Or, a group of characters could be composed entirely of evil characters bent on their selfish, greedy goals. Then there is the issue of evil characters or monsters that have turned their backs on their old habits (or upbringing) and choose to walk on the path of redemption, atonement, and good. Life is extremely difficult for these beings, who have to address fear, resentment, bias, and prejudice based on their appearance, their heritage, or their race. Portraying such a character or encountering one as part of an adventure can be a fascinating and challenging experience. This article discusses individuals who come from evil backgrounds who try to redeem themselves and integrate into a society that loathes and misunderstands them.

EVIL BACKGROUNDS

Evil doesn't form in a vacuum. It has a source and grows in places where good is absent or too weak to resist. Like a weed, evil pops up in unlikely, isolated places and runs rampant without opposition. Some people are evil regardless of race, upbringing, or culture, usually becoming something of an aberration in the eyes of others. However, some come from an evil background, but strive to be good, regardless of the obstacles, prejudices, and conditioning set upon them.

If you wish to play a character from an evil background who is trying to walk the straight and narrow path, you have many options. Below are several classic reasons why your PC might have once been evil or might be tempted to commit evil acts.

Belonging to an Evil Race

Some races have always been, and will always be, evil. Many of the monstrous humanoids listed in the *Monster Manual* are inherently evil—goblins, orcs, troglodytes, and so forth. For untold generations, these evil races have raided villages, burned homes, and killed with impunity. It's no wonder that the sight of a lone bugbear walking the streets of a human city is a rare thing—usually resulting in the humanoid being attacked just because of what he is.

Stripped to its basics, this sort of discrimination is nothing more than racism. Of course, much of this distrust can be easily justified if the race is notorious for violence and brutality. In some parts of the world, simply being a member of a given race is an automatic death sentence—aiding, abetting, or even ignoring them can be a crime as well.

Characters that belong to one of these races must struggle for acceptance. They might be tolerated in metropolitan areas, but less accepting areas are dangerous places to be. In these smaller communities, the characters stand out from the crowd. If they can prove by their words and deeds that they are not evil, they might be able to avoid the worst prejudices. Even so, prejudiced minds view even the most altruistic deeds with suspicion and distrust.

Evil Parents or Mentors

Sometimes an evil nature comes from the way a creature was raised, taught, or apprenticed. Whether nurtured to act in an arrogant, selfish, and merciless fashion, or brutalized into acting in kind, some people become evil because of the way others treat them.

Having evil parents or mentors can occur in places that are otherwise good and upstanding. This treatment can be overt or subtle and manipulative, but in either case, it serves to twist the young mind toward evil. Most of these unfortunate souls have nothing but contempt and hatred for the parents or mentor that brought them up in this way, but there are notable exceptions that revere the "harsh lessons" they were taught.

The idea that evil begets evil is well-established, and unless a character brought up by evil people leaves the place of her birth, she will fight a constant battle to prove that she does not adhere to the tenets of her upbringing. If the character's parents or mentor live, the character might be plagued by agents sent to bring her back into the fold or eliminate her.

Evil Society or Culture

Just like not all monsters are evil, not all "normal" races are completely good either. Some cultures are notoriously brutal, vindictive, and war-like. In these cultures, might makes right. Weakness, mercy, and kindness are exploited. War, raiding, slavery, and other despicable acts are the norm. Curiously, these evil cultures might be less overtly racist than elsewhere—they often accept nearly any being into the society, regardless of race, as long as it possesses the strength to defend itself.

By spending time among people with different, good-oriented values, a character from an evil society can heal his tainted heart. Of course, accent, style of clothing, or general appearance can inform others that the character belonged to the evil society. Such characters can either strive to educate those around them or suffer in silence, enduring the hatred and suspicion of others. Some become ambassadors for good, returning to their homelands to show their former people the error of their ways or change the society in more subtle ways to encourage good. Most such creatures find a few, trusted friends and avoid other contact.

Evil Planes

Creatures that come from certain planes of existence are infused with evil—it is in their very core. Sometimes, these outsiders make their way to the Material Plane, whether by accident, summoning, or to do the bidding of a superior. Most go there to cause as much terror and mayhem as possible before returning to their plane of origin.

Sometimes outsiders from these planes are forced to stay on the Material Plane. Separated from the source of their power, they can occasionally (and very rarely) succumb to alien ideas—kindness, forgiveness, and mercy. These few individuals come to see the error in their ways and slowly make the transition from evil to good. Composed of pure evil, such creatures find this transformation extremely difficult. In addition, these creatures often suffer the wrath of their former kin, who see such a change of heart as the worst crime imaginable.

Creatures from these planes lose a great deal when they try to become good. They cannot (or will not) use many of their spell-like abilities that involve evil energy (such as *circle of protection against good* or *blasphemy*). Their old habits of wanton destruction must be curtailed, along with the desire to bully and abuse others. Unless they have the ability to change their appearance, their mere presence is enough to cause fear and violence among normal people. However, for these beings, the transition from pure evil to that of good can allow redemption, letting their souls attain the one thing that is nearly impossible for demons, devils, and other fiends to attain—true peace.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS AND THE SEVEN GOODLY VIRTUES

The seven deadly sins and the seven goodly virtues are a useful set of guidelines to determine what sort of life a character is leading. While they are broad interpretations, they allow the DM to gauge a character's behavior to see how closely he lives according to his chosen alignment. Players might find it useful to pick some of these virtues and vices to help them define their characters' personalities and how their characters exhibit their alignments. Players wishing to play conflicted characters seeking redemption should pay special attention the seven deadly sins for inspiration about their character's past and the seven goodly virtues for the actions that will lead to living a good life.

The Seven Deadly Sins

All the shades of darkness and acts of evil cannot be encompassed by a mere seven sins, but the list below should provide more than enough temptation for most characters.

Pride: Pride, also known as vanity, is excessive belief in one's own abilities or value. It has been called the sin from which all others arise. A character filled with pride often considers herself better

EVIL BACKGROUNDS AND SOCIAL SKILLS

The table provided below gives suggestions for DC modifiers to Diplomacy and Intimidation checks based on a character's evil background. Characters with an evil legacy suffer penalties to Diplomacy checks (including with other evil people—evil doesn't trust evil), but gain bonuses to Intimidation checks. Bonuses and penalties apply only when dealing with people who are cognizant of the character's evil background. If the character belongs to a particularly evil and horrific group (such as a culture of cannibals), increase the bonus and penalties by an additional +1. These modifiers are cumulative. For example, if a character belongs to a well-known evil race, and belongs to a particularly evil religion, there is a -2 penalty to Diplomacy checks and a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks. Note that a creature with an evil reputation is likely to cause other creatures to have an initial attitude of hostile; any Diplomacy and Intimidate check should modify that attitude appropriately.

Background	Diplomacy DC Modifier	Intimidation DC Modifier
Character's race is considered evil	-2	+1
Character's culture is considered evil	-1	+1
Character's religion is considered evil	-1	+1
Character's parents/mentor were notoriously evil	-1	+1

than anyone else. She believes that she can do no wrong and that all of her actions and opninions, no matter how small, have great importance.

Greed: Greed is the desire for material wealth or gain. A greedy person covets what he does not have and holds on dearly to what he does. More than keeping a nest egg for the future, a truly greedy person hoards anything and everything he owns and constantly craves more and more.

Envy: Envious people desire others' traits, status, abilities, or situation. An envious person often feels inferior to others. Such a person usually tries to sabotage the target of her envy whenever she can.

Wrath: Wrath manifests in the individual who spurns love and opts instead for fury. In the dangerous and violent world of D&D, wrath can be a constant companion for those that live and die by sword and spell. A wrathful person is dangerous, violent, and unpredictable. Wrath is the source of some of the worst actions imaginable.

Lust: Lust is an inordinate craving for the pleasures of the body. A base emotion, lust can cause a person to act in a completely irrational manner. A lustful person is obsessed with sex, allowing it to dominate his life. A lustful person will often judge others solely on their looks or considers them nothing more than objects of pleasure.

Gluttony: Gluttony is an inordinate desire to consume more than one requires. A gluttonous person eats every scrap of food they have and hungrily watches the food of others with a covetous eye.

Sloth: Slothful people avoid work, whether physical or spiritual. This laziness prevents a person from taking care of day-to-day duties and often prevents them from achieving important goals. With sloth comes a disregard for responsibilities. In extreme cases, sloth also manifests as not caring for appearance, profession, family, and health. Sloth paralyzes people preventing them from doing the right thing.

The Seven Goodly Virtues

There are more virtues than can be counted and few posess them all. Seven stand out as counter to the seven deadly sins.

Humility: A humble person sees himself for what he is and does not compare himself to others—not considering himself above or below anyone else. Even when his power and righteousness are obvious, a humble person does not boast of them or abuse them.

Love: One of the most ephemeral virtues, love is expressed by a person through combinations of kindness, empathy, and the desire to see others do well.

Temperance: A temperate person accepts the natural limits of pleasures and preserves this balance. This does not pertain only to food, but to entertainment, goods, and even the company of others. She consumes only what is required to survive, avoids excess, and seeks a natural equilibrium in her life.

Chastity: Self-control prevents sexual pleasure from killing the soul by suffocation. The act of pleasure should serve to strengthen the soul and the desire to live. Chastity to the extreme is nothing more than masochism, especially if it is coupled with guilt.

Kindness: Instead of approaching a situation with violence, a kind person seeks a peaceful solution with patience and compassion. A kind person strives to overlook the faults of others and offer friendship, understanding, and aid.

Generosity: A generous person parts with material goods, knowing that they ultimately have no real value. Generosity also means allowing others their time in the spotlight, or their fair portion, without expecting anything in return.

Zeal: This is not obsessive, or excessive zealousness of a cause (which is harmful), but being energetic, proactive, and motivated to do the right thing. The seven deadly sins often have the effect of causing ennui, lethargy, and cynicism. Zeal works to counter these harmful effects, allowing a person to face evil directly, forcefully, and with determination.

REDEMPTION

The path to evil is an easy one, often spiraling out of control with

ALIGNMENT, TEMPTATION, AND REDEMPTION

A character of any alignment can use the temptation and redemption system. Here are some guidelines on how each alignment might have cause to use the temptation and redemption system.

Lawful Good: A lawful good character is considered a paragon of all that is virtuous and right. However, she also has a long way to fall, and her road of righteousness is paved with temptation. A heart shielded against evil is all the more vulnerable to cracking.

Chaotic Good: The chaotic good character is a rebel, and as such, can be tempted to do questionable things to protect himself or to preserve infringement on the freedom of others. Such a character might become obsessed with the concept of freedom and deluded into thinking that they should be allowed to do whatever they wish.

Neutral Good: By not being biased toward chaos or law, the neutral good character could fall sway to evil that preys on the unaware. Her sense of fairness could bind her to the evil around her, or evil could wear her down until she doesn't care anymore.

Lawful Neutral: A lawful neutral character believes in the rule of law and order. As law can be twisted to evil ends, so can this character if he blinds himself to the pain laws can cause. Alternatively, he might come to understand that the law exists to serve the people and to make their lives better through acts of kindness and good.

Neutral: A true neutral character sits on a razor's edge, with temptation and redemption pushing her in both directions. These pressures can make a normally disinterested or detached individual more good or evil. She could easily sway in either direction, "trying them out" for a while, then choosing good or evil as she sees fit.

Chaotic Neutral: Already self-centered, a chaotic neutral person could easily fall to evil if he believes that he can get away with evil actions. Such a character could also come to understand that he has been selfish and dedicate himself toward helping others.

Neutral Evil: A neutral evil person is self-absorbed. While everything is done with her best interests at heart, there might be times when a generous act of kindness to her could touch her blackened soul.

Lawful Evil: A lawful evil person's twisted sense of honor might make him believe that what he's doing is in the best interest to those around him, despite the sorrow and oppression that he causes. On those rare occasions when he becomes cognizant of his actions, redemption might follow.

Chaotic Evil: A chaotic evil person must temper his anger, his hatred, and his violence, which can be extremely difficult. Like other evil beings, however, the chaotic evil character can sometimes feel remorse, guilt, and the beginnings of empathy. For such a wild soul, such feelings can cause a great deal of conflict.

little effort. However, going from a life of evil to one of good is a hard, challenging road fraught with failure. Evil characters must constantly fight to stay one step ahead of their instincts, their training, and their former beliefs in order to put the past behind them.

Temptation and Redemption Points

Part of walking the path of good is resisting the temptation to do evil things and successfully putting such thoughts out of one's mind. Fighting the urges that come naturally, conflicted individuals try to do the right thing, offering compassion, mercy, and generosity to others. Most shun the things and people that enabled their bad behavior, making it almost impossible to return to the old way of life. However, the things that evil people avoid while trying to redeem themselves are the same temptations that bring good people down.

As a way of keeping track of the good and evil that a conflicted character commits during his life, the DM can use an optional rule to find out if their alignment should shift to one more befitting the character's actions. To do this, the DM makes use of two different types of points that track the good and evil actions of a character—temptation points and redemption points. The seven deadly sins listed above can be used as guidelines to help the DM determine if and when a character should acquire one of these points. As the character gains these points, the character's alignment can shift toward good or evil.

Temptation points can be gained when a character willingly performs an evil act. This could be something as overt as murder, theft, unprovoked assault, and the like, or something more subtle such as telling a lie when falsehood is unnecessary. Each temptation point pushes the character closer to evil.

REDEMPTION DCS

Action	DC
General Redemptions	
Ended a fight through diplomacy	20
Convinced a criminal to mend his ways	15
Saved a city of innocents from evil	10
Humble Actions	
Refused to take advantage of the respect given by others	20
Give honest praise and respect to others	15
Was truly humble after an amazing act	10
Loving Actions	
Treated family in a loving manner	20
Took on a meaningful loving relationship	15
Showed love to someone despite that persons hurtful actions	10
Temperate Actions	
Resisted eating or drinking more than needed	20
Resisted a debilitating habit	15
Successfully kicked a debilitating habit (drugs, alcohol evil magic)	10
Chaste Actions	
Spurned a person exhibiting lewd behavior	20
Resisted seduction	15
Resisted a sexual encounter that had no repercussions	10
Kind Actions	
Showed kindness to a downtrodden person	20
Showed kindness to racial enemy	15
Showed kindness to an arch enemy or evil outsider	10
Generous Actions	
Gave to someone in need without risk	20
Gave to someone knowing they were not in need	15
Gave when in need	10
Zealous Actions	
Was proactive, energetic, and positive	20
Took a stand against an evil act	15
Took righteous action when all seemed lost	10

KEEPING TEMPTATION and Redemption Points Secret

As an alternate rule, the DM can secretly track how many temptation and redemption points each character has. This requires keen observation of how a player portrays his character—acts that go counter to the character's alignment should be duly noted. Feel free to give warnings to a player if her character is getting close to conversion, or you can keep it hidden until the final moment. Of course, players should be aware that you are using this rule so they won't be taken off guard when you tell them that their character has shifted alignment.

Characters might gain redemption points when they make an extra effort to commit an unselfish, altruistic act. This includes helping or defending those unable to provide for themselves, giving to the poor and downtrodden, and standing up in the face overwhelming evil. These actions must be done willingly and sincerely to gain a redemption point.

Using Temptation and Redemption Points

Temptation and redemption points are intended for use by characters from an evil background or characters with an evil past who are conflicted about their nature and struggling against their dark sides. The system has no end goal—it is meant as a tracking system for a character's alignment on the good/evil axis. If you wish, you could use this system to track any character's alignment, devising a similar system for the law/chaos axis. Always remember that some acts are so villainous that they should automatically grant a temptation point, and a truly terrible act should automatically shift a character's alignment to evil; a high proportion of redemption points should not be used as a bank to retain a good alignment while committing evil acts.

Gaining Temptation and Redemption Points

When a conflicted character commits an evil action, the DM should have the player make a check or save (see Saving Against Temptation or Redemption below) with the DC determined by the DM or taken from the

Temptation DCs list. If the character fails the check or save, she gains a temptation point. In general, committing a DC 10 act is a weak temptation to commit more evil, and the act causes little harm. Committing acts of DC 15 requires considerably more willpower to resist the path of darkness. Actions of DC 20 are truly vile and make other acts of evil seem mild by comparison. Higher DCs are possible, and accomplishing multiple evil deeds with a single evil action should raise the temptation check DC.

When a conflicted character commits a good action, the DM should have the player make a check or save (see Saving Against Temptation or Redemption below) with the DC determined by the DM or taken from the Redemption DCs list. If the character makes the check or save, she gains a redemption point. In general, a committing a DC 20 act of good is a weak protection against further evil actions. Committing a DC 15 act of good is a good step on the path to redeption. Good actions of DC 10 are truly valiant and pure, providing conflicted characters with a focus for their internal struggle. To represent the difficulty of walking the straight and narrow, no action should automatically grant a redemption point.

Each player should keep track of how many of these points her character acquires. If the difference between the character's temptation and redemption points is greater than their current Wisdom score, then the character's alignment will shift one step toward evil or good, depending on whether the character has more redemption or temptation points. When this happens, the character looses all temptation and redemption points and the process of tallying points begins anew.

For example, Rasar is a chaotic evil character with a Wisdom score of 10 trying to turn a new leaf and become a good person after being spared by a paladin. Over his adventures he acquires 12 redemption points and 2 temptation points. After a particularly valorous act, he gains one more redemption point. The difference between the number of temptation and redemption points he gained exceeds his Wisdom score, and the redemption points are most numerous. Rasar thus shifts from chaotic evil to chaotic neutral, and the process of tallying points for actions begins again.

TEMPTATION DCS

Action	DC
General Temptations	
Lied, cheated, or stole when it was unnecessary	10
Succumbed to an addiction (drugs, evil magic, or alcohol)	15
Used evil magic	20
Prideful Actions	
Excessive boasting	10
Used status or authority in a heavy handed way	15
Blamed another to cover up a mistake	20
Greedy Actions	
Refused to give to someone in need	10
Kept treasure that should be shared	15
Stole from someone in need	20
Envious Actions	
Copying a person's actions or demeanor	10
Spread slanderous statements about target of envy	15
Sabotaged the target of envy to gain advancement	20
Wrathful Actions	
Harmed a negotiation with an act of violence	10
Incited a riot	15
Killed a foe when capture would suffice	20
Lustful Actions	
Acted in a lewd manner	10
Ignored more important matters for lust	15
Seduced an innocent	20
Gluttonous Actions	
Ate far more than necessary	10
Consumed all of a food item that was to be shared	15
Refused to give food to a starving person	20
Slothful Actions	
Rested excessively	10
Slept on watch duty	15
Ignored a friend in need for no good reason	20

Saving against Temptation or Redemption

If the DM chooses to use these alternate rules, then a conflicted character must make a save or check when taking certain actions. Here are two options and their benefits and drawbacks.

Wisdom Check: Wisdom represents intuition, understanding, and insight (including insight into one's self). It is one of the best ways to see if a character understands and rejects the temptation of acts that go counter to their goal of purity. A Wisdom check might suit your game better than a saving throw because it ignores the benefits that increasing in level, class choice, or feats can give to a saving throw. The downside is that a character with a low Wisdom has little chance to improve their lot and easily risks falling into evil.

Will Saves: A Will save represents a character's force of personality and willpower, and it's an excellent way to represent a character denying temptation and choosing the path of good. Obviously, high-level characters will make their saves more often than low-level characters, representing the greater power to remold themselves such characters wield. Unfortunately, this system makes characters of certain classes more likely to become or remain evil.

Regardless of what kind of check or save you use, remember that the point of the system is not to allow good or neutral characters to commit many evil acts while retaining their alignment; it is designed for those who wish to roleplay the internal struggle of an alignment change or play good characters from normally evil races. D

BY EVIL BOUND

by Mike Mearls · illustrated by Wayne Reynolds, Jason A. Engle, and Cara Mitten

Although the Blood War has pitted tanar'ri against baatezu for endless centuries, the struggle has remained more or less a stalemate. Whenever the demons make an advance, their poor organization and lack of discipline cause them to overextend themselves and quickly fritter away their gains. The devils make promising progress under the command of able leaders, but their endless bickering, politicking, and backstabbing ensure that any successful general is soon deposed by a rival more proficient at navigating the treacherous political waters of the Nine Hells.

Such was the fate of Balruhk the Invincible. Considered a brilliant general even by other pit fiends, he swiftly rose through the ranks by virtue of his skill at arms and his keen military mind. Unfortunately, his unbroken string of successes earned him enemies among the baatezu, particularly those devils he had displaced on his way to the top.

Even as Balruhk's legions marched into the Abyss, his rivals plotted his doom. First they approached the mortal wizard Yullok, a master of diabolism and conjuration, and he agreed to complete a powerful ritual that would drag Balruhk to the Material Plane and bind him forever within a mithral pentagram. In return, Yullok would be given mastery over a unit of hellforged devils—powerful creatures that functioned as enforcers and police amongst the baatezu legions. But the diabolist would need time to perform such a ritual, so Balruhk's disgruntled enemies sought the aid of certain demon lords who were also quite eager to see Balruhk defeated. Each of these demon lords pledged to sacrifice a few tanar'ri armies to hold off Balruhk while the ritual was completed. To further ensure the success of the venture, Yullok made a pact with the battleloths (yugoloths capable of taking weapon form) that served Balruhk and his troops. These mercenary creatures agreed to betray Balruhk and his followers for a very high price.

> Even as the mighty pitfiend Balruhk marched his legions into the Abyss, his rivals plotted his doom.

On the chosen day, Balruhk's enemies carried out their plan. The assembled baatezu and tanar'ri armies crashed into each other with a roar heard across the cosmos. At the height of the struggle, Yullok's spell gripped Balruhk and tore him away from the fight, binding him into captivity. But the mortal wizard could not control the terrible energies that his spell had unleashed. Both armies were annihilated by the magical backlash, and the souls of tanar'ri and baatezu alike were reduced to the tiniest bits of essence. Shockwaves rocked the Abyss, altering its fundamental structure and incorporating the soul remnants of the dead tanar'ri and baatezu troops into the elemental material of the nearby layers. Eventually, the altered abyssal material reformed and combined into element-based demonic forms that were animated by patchwork souls composed of both tanar'ri and baatezu essence. Slowly, over the course of almost three centuries, these

new elemental demons grew in number. Formed in violence from souls driven by their hatred of one another, these creatures despised both tanar'ri and baatezu, but only the former were close enough for them to fight.

But the damage from the spell was not confined to the tanar'ri realms. When the Dukes of Hell learned of the pact with Yullok, they were enraged. While the devils who had struck the deal were well within the bounds of baatezu law, the dukes were not about to consign a legion of their most useful and loyal servants to a mere mortal. Instead, they put forth an edict stating that no hellforged devil could serve a mortal master for the next three centuries.

For their part, the other yugoloths were enraged by the battleloths' treachery against the baatezu masters they had served. While a few such actions were to be expected from time to time, the pervasive nature of the betrayal caused a precipitous slide in the employment offers that all the yugoloths received. This circumstance led the yugoloths to bar battleloths from gathering in groups of more than thirty or accepting employment with mortals for the next three centuries.

Such is the scope of the Blood War that to the tanar'ri and baatezu, these events were merely small-scale developments. But because of the restrictions placed upon the hellforged devils and the battleloths, and the time it took for the abyssal elemental demons to become established, all three kinds of fiends remained unknown to mortals for several centuries. Now that these outsiders are free to respond to summoning spells, a host of new evil creatures can threaten the realms of humanoids. Now and then someone summons one of these creatures by accident, but occasionally a researcher uncovers some long-lost lore that describes the methods once used to call them.

Meanwhile, the great pit fiend Balruhk lingers on in Yullok's forgotten citadel, waiting for an opportunity to win free of his captivity and exact his vengeance.

BALRUHK LINGERS ON IN A FORGOTTEN CITADEL, WAITING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO WIN FREE AND EXACT HIS VENGEANCE.

18 Hell-Spawned Servants

Elemental Demons

The material of the Abyss constantly shifts and transforms, as befits a realm where chaotic beings hold sway. Sometimes, the raw material of the plane spawns a living creature imbued with a patchwork soul made from the remnants of the tanar'ri and baatezu souls that were shattered during Balruhk's final battle. These demons are analogous to wild animals in other realms. Each embodies the natural material that spawned it, be it fire from a lava pool or ice from an endless glacier.

The demons of the Abyss sometimes capture these elemental demons and train them for use in war or as laborers, but more often they simply keep them for food or use their bodies as sources of spell components. Spellcasters also try to summon these demons to the Material Plane and bind them as servants. Many summoners actually prefer these demons because their relatively low intelligence makes them easier to subjugate than most other outsiders.

Most demon lords maintain small herds of elemental demons for use in assaults on their enemies or as a last line of defense. Like other demons, these creatures are wild and almost uncontrollable. They respect only those who have the strength and arcane power to browbeat them into obedience. Even when a demon lord manages to bind such a creature into service, it is much less dependable than any other demon. Thus, only demon lords in dire straits rely solely upon them.

Combat

Elemental demons are dangerous foes that can easily overwhelm inexperienced adventuring parties. Even vrocks and other tanar'ri must be careful when traveling the Abyss alone, for elemental demons have been known to gather in packs to hunt down and slaughter the beings who would feed on and enslave their kind.

Outsider Traits: An elemental demon has darkvision (60-foot range). It cannot be raised or resurrected.

Hit Dice: 5d8 (22 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: 30 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect)
AC: 18 (+3 Dex, +5 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 15
Attacks: 2 claws +6 melee and beak +4 melee
Damage: Claws 1d4+1, beak 1d6
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Air blast

Special Qualities: DR 5/+1, immunities (cold, electricity), outsider traits, SR 12
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +6
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 5, Wis 15, Cha 10
Skills: Balance +8, Climb +6, Listen +9, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +7
Feats: Alertness, Multiattack

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary or flock (3-12)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 6-10 HD (Medium-size); 11-15 HD (Large)

Air demons are spawned from the titanic, howling storms that tear across some layers of the Abyss. These creatures travel in flocks, eagerly descending to attack small bands of travelers or demons they encounter.

An air demon has a pale blue body, feathered birdlike wings, and a long, vicious beak. Its fingers are spindly and thin, and its face resembles that of a bird of prey.

When trained as servants, air demons can function as scouts and messengers, although they are not reliable enough to be trusted with important missives. Sometimes, an air demon unwittingly delivers a message to the wrong person simply because it is too dense to remember who the intended recipient is. Crafty demon lords make use of this tendency and use air demons to trick their enemies. By giving an air demon a false missive to deliver and then deliberately sending it across the path of a rival or an unwitting group of adventurers capable of defeating it, the sender ensures that the false information lands exactly where he intends.

Combat

Air demons prefer to attack by diving down from a high altitude and tearing at their opponents with beaks and talons. Despite their ferocity, these creatures can easily be beaten back by a determined defense. Air demons exhibit almost no loyalty to each other—in fact, they have been known to tear the wings off a weaker member of their own flock, thus forcing it to remain behind and cover their retreat.

Air Blast (Su): At will, an air demon can form a powerful sphere out of air and send it whistling toward a target as a ranged touch attack (maximum range 100 feet, no range increment). If the attack hits, the target takes 3d6 points of damage and must make a successful Strength check (DC 12) or be pushed 5 feet directly backward and knocked prone.

Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 15 (+1 Dex, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 14
Attacks: 2 claws +6 melee
Damage: Claw 1d6
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Stream of ashes
Special Qualities: DR 5/+1, fire subtype, form of ashes, outsider traits, SR 12
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 10
Skills: Climb +8, Escape Artist +9, Hide +9, Intimidate +8, Listen +9, Move Silently +9
Feats: Dodge, Mobility

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary or pack (3-8)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class

Ash demons are born from the remnants of burning souls that constantly wander the scorched landscapes of the Abyss. Perhaps because of the sentience with which their raw material is imbued, they are by far the most intelligent and cunning of the elemental demons.

An ash demon appears as a black-skinned humanoid with white eyes, a long red tongue, and gleaming white teeth. Its ears and eyes are overly large for its head, and its long, flowing hair is normally worn pulled back.

These elemental demons meet in secret cabals to plot against the other creatures of the Abyss. Some are accomplished spellcasters, and such individuals often bargain with mortals to gain servants, extend their power, and foil their rivals.

Ash demons are the most likely of all abyssal creatures to gather elemental demons together and attempt to train them as servants and warriors. In some isolated areas, ash demons reign supreme, with small armies of air demons, fire demons, and other abyssal creatures at their command. Only the swirling, trackless nature of the Abyss allows such fiefdoms to survive; the tanar'ri would quickly exterminate these upstarts if they could locate them.

Characters who encounter ash demons might find themselves drawn into the war between these monsters and the tanar'ri. Should it appear that a mortal knows the location or plans of an ash demon, she becomes a target for both sides. The ash demon and its minions relentlessly pursue and attempt to silence the character, while agents of the tanar'ri give chase in hopes of learning what the mortal knows.

Combat

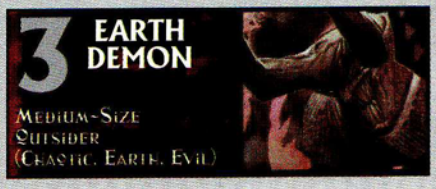
An ash demon typically begins battle by transforming into a cloud of ash, since this form allows it to ignore most physical attacks (see below). Then it begins firing a deadly stream of ash to choke and suffocate its enemies. Should the battle turn against it, it flees, relying on its ash-cloud form to avoid damage.

When ash demons encounter humanoids and other travelers in the Abyss, they typically attempt to parley, in hopes of winning new allies in their struggle against the tanar'ri.

Stream of Ashes (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, an ash demon can breathe a stream of ashes at a single target as a ranged touch attack (maximum range 50 feet, no range increment). If the attack hits, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). Success results in the ashes having no effect. Creatures that do not breathe are not affected. Failure results in the creature suffering 2d6 points of damage from the choking ash, and thereafter, the victim must make a new Fortitude save at the same DC each round until it either dies or succeeds. Each failure means the victim takes another 1d6 points of damage and is unable to act that round because of coughing and choking. Success ends the effect; the victim has coughed up the ashes and can act normally thereafter. A successful Heal check (DC 20) clears the victim's mouth, allowing normal actions and preventing damage for that round, but the victim must still save again the following round against the full effect. A creature cannot be affected by more than one stream of ashes attacks at a time.

Fire Subtype (Ex): An ash demon is immune to fire damage but takes double damage from cold unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed. In that case, the creature takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Form of Ashes (Su): Three times per day, an ash demon can take the form of a cloud of fine, powdery soot. This has the same effect as the *gaseous form* spell cast by a spellcaster of a level equal to the ash demon's Hit Dice.



Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (60 hp)
Initiative: -1
Speed: 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.
AC: 21 (-1 Dex, +12 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 21
Attacks: Greatclub +11/+6 melee
Damage: Greatclub 1d10+4
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Fire of earth
Special Qualities: DR 10/+1, earthen form, fire immunity, outsider traits, SR 16
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +5
Abilities: Str 17, Dex 8, Con 16, Int 5, Wis 8, Cha 7
Skills: Balance +8, Climb +10, Hide +5, Listen +7, Spot +7, Wilderness Lore +7
Feats: Power Attack, Skill Focus (Hide), Sunder

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 9-16 HD (Medium-size); 17-24 HD (Large)

These chunks of demonic earth are simpletons even by the standards of the elemental demons. They delight in dismembering small creatures and enjoy stalking injured demons or other weakened creatures. Earth demons have been known to sit in rock form for weeks at a time, patiently waiting for prey to stumble into their ambush.

An earth demon is capable of taking on either of two forms at will—a large, featureless rock, or a human-shaped statue of a demonic, horned warrior clad in chainmail and carrying a massive club. Its face is permanently etched into a leering grin.

A few demon lords and powerful spellcasters have tried to use earth demons as sentinels, but this tactic is rarely effective. Invariably the earth demons either wander away to what they consider better hunting grounds or doze off and allow intruders to pass unmolested.

Combat

In battle, earth demons use their mighty clubs to smash their enemies. A typical earth demon relies on its earthen form ability to catch opponents unaware, so that it can revert to humanoid form and perhaps deal a crippling blow before its target can cast a spell or ready weapons.

Even when faced with determined opponents, earth demons eagerly fight to the death. These creatures are simply too dim to realize their danger, and they have been known to attack demon lords, pit fiends, and other powerful creatures solely out of ignorant malice and hatred.

Fire of Earth (Ex): An earth demon's blood runs as hot as fiery lava. Whenever the creature is hit with a piercing or slashing weapon, its burning blood sprays out in a 5-foot-wide, 10-foot line toward the origin of the attack. Any creature caught in the spray (normally only the opponent that made the attack) must make a successful Reflex save (DC 17) or take 1d8 points of fire damage.

Earthen Form (Su): At will, an earth demon can use a standard action to take the shape of a Medium-size rocky outcropping, a small boulder, or other earthen terrain feature. In this form, the earth demon cannot move, does not gain a Dexterity bonus to armor class, and it gains a +10 competence bonus on Hide checks when in surroundings that would normally include such features. The demon does not gain any special protection in this form; it takes damage normally from spells and weapon attacks. The earth demon can return to its humanoid shape at will as a move-equivalent action.

4 FIRE DEMON

Medium-Size Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Fire)

Hit Dice: 9d8+9 (49 hp)
Initiative: +8
Speed: 30 ft.
AC: 20 (+4 Dex, +6 natural), touch

14, flat-footed 16
Attacks: 2 claws +14 melee
Damage: Claw 1d6+1 plus 1d6 fire
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Flame touch
Special Qualities: DR 15/+1, fiery aura, fire subtype, outsider traits, SR 20
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +6
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills: Balance +12, Climb +13, Jump +15, Move Silently +16, Tumble +18
Feats: Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (claw), Weapon Focus (claw)

Climate/Terrain: Any temperate or warm land and underground
Organization: Solitary or swarm (4-24)
Challenge Rating: 7
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 9-18 HD (Medium-size); 19-27 HD (Large)

Fire demons are living embodiments of abyssal flame. These simple, violent brutes delight in spreading fire and pain wherever they travel. In much the same way that swarms of locusts plague the Material Plane, packs of fire demons sweep across the Abyss, burning all they encounter and drawing sustenance from the ashes. More than one demon lord has seen his domain blasted by a rampaging mob of fire demons, so now the residents of demonic fortresses keep pails of water on hand to deal with that particular threat.

A fire demon looks like a bald, red-skinned humanoid with coal-black eyes and a toothless mouth. Its eyes glow with a reddish aura from the fiery liquid that flows through its veins.

An evil spellcaster intent on conquest could use summoned fire demons to destroy enemy fortifications and spread ruin throughout a city. Even a single fire demon in a crowded urban area could touch off a conflagration capable of devastating the entire town.

Combat

Fire demons love the sight of flames, so they always try to start as many fires as possible during combat, often setting creatures alight just to watch them burn. Because fire demons are sometimes too dense to notice the difference between a living creature and an inanimate flammable object, they often choose the closest target of any sort to attack with their flame touch. In battle, fire demons usually focus on starting fires rather than on overwhelming their foes, as cleverer combatants would.

Flame Touch (Ex): Any creature that is hit by a fire demon's claw attack (or that hits the fire demon with a natural weapon or an unarmed strike) takes 1d6 points of fire damage and (if flamable) must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 15) or catch on fire (see Catching on Fire in Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The fire burns for 1d4 rounds unless extinguished.

> Fire demons are simple, violent brutes that delight in spreading fire and pain wherever they travel.

Fiery Aura (Ex): A fire demon is surrounded by an aura of searing flame that deals 1d6 points of fire damage to every creature within 10 feet. Creatures that suffer damage due to the fire must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 15) or catch on fire (see Catching on Fire in Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). The fire burns for 1d4 rounds unless extinguished. Any unattended flammable objects in this area burst into flames. Treat this effect as an emanation. A fire demon can suppress or activate this ability at will.

Fire Subtype (Ex): A fire demon is immune to fire damage but takes double damage from cold unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed. In that case, the creature takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Hit Dice: 10d8 (45 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
AC: 20 (+2 Dex, +8 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 18
Attacks: Ice blade (*+2 short sword*) +11/+6 melee and ice blade (*+2 short sword*) +11 melee
Damage: Ice blade (*+2 short sword*) 1d6+4 plus ice shards /19-20 (primary hand), ice blade (*+2 short sword*) 1d6+3 plus ice shards /19-20 (off hand)
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Ice blades, ice shards
Special Qualities: Cold subtype, DR 10/+1, outsider traits, SR 16
Saves: Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +7
Abilities: Str 15, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 6
Skills: Climb +12, Intuit Direction +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +12, Search +9, Spot +10, Wilderness Lore +10
Feats: Ambidexterity, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Climate/Terrain: Any arctic and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, hunting party (3-8), or flock (9-24)
Challenge Rating: 6
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 11-20 HD (Medium-size); 17-24 HD (Large)

In the frigid regions of the Abyss, ice demons reign supreme. Even pit fiends and powerful indviduals avoid the massive glaciers the ice demons call home.

An ice demon appears as a bald humanoid with piercing blue eyes and pale blue skin that is always coated with a layer of frost. A pair of white, furry, batlike wings sprouts from its back.

Ice demons dwell in caverns carved out of the same abyssal ice that forms their own bodies. Their deep, magical bond with this substance also allows them to shape weapons, shields, tools, and other items from it, despite their limited intelligence and skill.

Of all the elemental demons, ice demons are the most likely to be recruited as servants and soldiers by other powerful creatures. Some demon lords build huge furnaces near the glaciers where these creatures dwell, hoping to melt their homelands and thus make them vulnerable to press gangs.

Combat

In combat, ice demons like to swoop in for the attack, deal several blows with their icy blades, then fly away, giving the ice shards that their weapons leave behind (see below) time to slay their enemies. After a while, they return to collect their loot.

Ice Blades (Su): The twin weapons wielded by an ice demon resemble short swords with barbed blades made entirely of ice. In an ice demon's hands, each such ice blade functions as a *+2 short sword*. In the hands of any other creature, it functions as a normal short sword until it melts away, which occurs after it has been outside the possession of an ice demon for 1 hour. An ice demon can make new ice blades as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Ice Shards (Su): With each successful hit, an ice blade in the hands on an ice demon deposits small, razor-sharp slivers of ice in the wound. These bits of abyssal ice remain dormant for 2d6 rounds, then surge to life, digging into the victim's flesh and dealing 3d6 points of cold damage (Fort DC 18 half) in a single round before melting away. This damage is not cumulative for multiple hits from an ice blade; the effect consumes all ice shards embedded in the victim upon its first activation. Once the effect has activated, however, the creature is vulnerable to shards embedded by later attacks. A Heal check (DC 20) removes the ice shards from a creature

Cold Subtype (Ex): An ice demon is immune to cold damage but takes double damage from fire unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed. In that case, the creature takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Hit Dice: 8d8 (36 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 30 ft., swim 60 ft.
AC: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15
Attacks: 2 claws +10 melee and bite +7 melee
Damage: Claws 1d6+1, bite 1d8
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Waters of fire
Special Qualities: DR 10/+1, fire immunity, SR 15
Saves: Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7
Abilities: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 10
Skills: Climb +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Swim +18, Wilderness Lore +10
Feats: Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary or school (3-12)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 9-16 HD (Medium-size); 13-24 HD (Large)

> Water demons infest almost every waterway in the Abyss—be it river, lake, or sea.

Water demons infest almost every waterway in the Abyss—be it river, lake, or sea. Schools of the creatures gather in areas where ships commonly sail or where other denizens of the Abyss approach the shore to drink. While water demons can survive on land, they rarely venture there, since they cannot use their waters of fire ability on land.

A water demon is a piscine humanoid with scaly skin, bulbous eyes, and oversized teeth that protrude like fangs. Its fingers and toes are tipped with long, curved claws.

Often demonologists store valuable treasures in deep wells or pools, then summon and bind water demons to guard the items. Whenever curious or greedy interlopers brave the water in search of loot, the demons transform the innocent-looking pool into a boiling pit. Alternatively, a wizard or sorcerer with a penchant for piracy might summon these creatures to sink merchant ships then send followers who can breathe underwater to recover treasure from the sunken vessels.

Combat

A water demon usually begins underwater combat by using its waters of fire ability to make the water around it boil and churn like the seas of the Abyss, literally cooking nearby creatures. Once it enters melee combat, a water demon uses its sharp claws and fanged maw to tear at its enemies.

Waters of Fire (Su): A swimming water demon can open the vents along its torso and forcefully expel gouts of superheated steam that cause the water in a 10-foot radius to boil. Every creature in this area must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 14) each round or take 1d8 points of fire damage. The churning water also decreases visibility, granting all creatures in the area one-quarter concealment per 5 feet of churning water between them. The maximum duration of this effect is 20 rounds per day, though the demon need not use the entire duration at once. Once the waters of fire ability has been activated, the water demon can maintain it as a free action during subsequent rounds until the maximum duration for the day is reached or end the effect in order to use it later.

DEVILS

The hellforged devils were originally constructs made of coal, obsidian, glass, or other natural materials made to house evil souls doomed to eternal torment. Over the eons, however, the strange magic of the Nine Hells gradually transformed these creatures from constructs into true beings. The rituals originally used in their creation, however, still compel hellforged devils to obey hell's convoluted legal code to the letter. This greater-than-normal emphasis on rigid adherence to law makes these creatures ideal enforcers and executioners.

From the lowliest lemure to the mightiest duke, every devil occupies a well-defined place in the hierarchy of the Hells. The hellforged devils serve to protect and maintain this order. Although they also fight alongside the legions of the Nine Hells in the Blood War, their primary function is to track down miscreant devils, mortals, and others who

violate the strictures of the Nine Hells. Thus, mortal wizards who break their pacts with devils often find hordes of hellforged devils besieging their towers.

Aurandeus, the chief magistrate of the Nine Hells, is the creator and leader of the hellforged devils. This creaky, decrepit figure is both the weakest and the strongest of the Dukes of Hell. He appears as an ancient human with red gemstone eyes, wearing a tattered black robe and a carrying a short rod of gold and a thick, battered, leather-bound tome. Eons ago, Aurandeus tried to shackle the most powerful devils to his will. Although his plot failed, his magic and talent were so formidable that his foes could not destroy him. Instead, they levied upon him a powerful curse: He could never again harm a devil or a mortal who had not broken one of the rules in the complex code of law that governed in the Nine Hells.

Now, as the ultimate arbiter of diabolical disputes, Aurandeus plays a major role in keeping the most powerful devils from turning against each other. Dozens of times in the past, crises that could have thrown the legions of the Nine Hells into widespread civil war were averted when Aurandeus stepped in with a fair judgment. Despite his pivotal role in keeping hell functioning, however, the devil is dissatisfied with his lot, and he constantly plots to escape his curse. Aurandeus uses a vast array of ploys to trick mortals, demons, devils, and other creatures into helping him remove his curse and bring the legions of the Nine Hells under his banner.

Aurandeus usually uses obsidian devils (see below) to enforce his edicts. Although they were originally his creations, these creatures now function as enforcers and guardians throughout the Hells. Aurandeus seethes at the thought that the minions he built to serve him are instead enforcing and maintaining the very order he wishes to subvert.

Combat

Since they lack vital organs, all hellforged devils have some qualities in common with constructs, even though they are actually outsiders.

Hellforged (Ex): Hellforged devils are immune to critical hits and are not subject to death from massive damage.

Outsider Traits: A hellforged devil has darkvision (60-foot range). It cannot be raised or resurrected.

7 COAL DEVIL

LARGE OUTSIDER (EVIL, FIRE, LAWFUL)

Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (60 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: 20 ft.
AC: 18 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +10 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 18
Attacks: 2 slams +12 melee
Damage: Slam 1d8+4
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Fiery breath
Special Qualities: Aura of smoke, blindsight 90 ft., DR 10/+1, fire subtype, hellforged, outsider traits, SR 18
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +7
Abilities: Str 18, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 11
Skills: Climb +11, Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +11, Listen +12, Search +4, Sense Motive +12, Spot +12
Feats: Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or gang (3-8)
Challenge Rating: 7
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always lawful evil
Advancement: 9-16 HD (Large); 17-24 HD (Huge)

Coal devils serve as enforcers and shock troops in diabolic armies. They are well suited to service as front-line soldiers because their tough bodies can absorb much more punishment than those of osyluths and other devils. Thus, coal devils are often used to absorb the brunt of an attack or to spearhead an assault.

Composed of knobby, twisted chunks of coal, a coal devil resembles a misshapen humanoid with short legs, long arms that end in clumsy, battering fists, and a small head. Its face is perpetually contorted in a scream, and its body is continually aflame, filling the area around it with a thick cloud of smoke.

Coal devils are sometimes assigned as bodyguards for mortal wizards and clerics who work to further the goals of powerful baatezu. The fiery coal devils are famous for their loyalty and reliability, and their melee abilities make them excellent protectors.

Combat

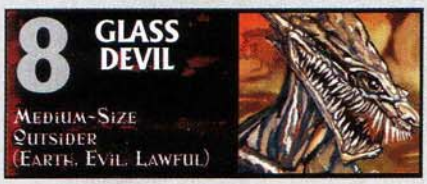
In battle, a coal devil relies on its aura of smoke to hinder and blind its foes while it pounds away at them with its mighty fists. The creature can also unleash the searing fire within its body as a cone of flame, incinerating its enemies.

Fiery Breath (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, a coal devil can focus the flames that burn within its body and project them outward as a 30-foot-long cone of fire. Every creature within this area takes 6d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 17 half).

Aura of Smoke (Ex): Because a coal devil burns continuously, a 10-foot-radius cloud of ash, smoke, and cinders constantly surrounds it. This effect obscures all sight (including darkvision) beyond 5 feet. An adjacent creature has one-half concealment (20% miss chance); creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker cannot use sight to locate the target). Furthermore, every air-breathing creature caught within the smoke cloud must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 17) each round or suffer 1d6 points of damage from choking on the ashes and cinders. Coal devils are immune to this effect. A strong wind (such as that generated by a *gust of wind* spell) destroys this cloud, although the coal devil automatically generates a new one within 1d4 rounds.

Blindsight: A coal devil can ascertain its surroundings through its incredibly precise hearing. This ability enables it to discern objects and creatures within a 90-foot radius. The coal devil usually does not need to make Listen or Spot checks to notice creatures within range of its blindsight. A *silence* spell negates this ability and forces the coal devil to rely on its weak vision, which has a maximum range of 5 feet.

Fire Subtype (Ex): A coal devil is immune to fire damage but takes double damage from cold unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed. In that case, the creature takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.



Hit Dice: 6d8 (27 hp)
Initiative: +4
Speed: 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.
AC: 18 (+4 Dex, +4 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 14
Attacks: 2 claws +10 melee
Damage: Claw 1d6
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: DR 5/+1, immunities (cold, fire), hellforged, invisibility, outsider traits, SR 15
Saves: Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +6
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 11
Skills: Balance +6, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Jump +2, Listen +10, Move Silently +13, Spot +10, Tumble +13
Feats: Dodge, Weapon Finesse (claw)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or pack (3-12)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always lawful evil
Advancement: 7-12 (Medium-size); 13-18 (Large)

The spies and watchers of the hellforged legions, glass devils excel at missions that require stealth and quick attacks. Because they are nearly invisible, these creatures make perfect scouts. They are often dispatched to observe foes of more powerful hellforged devils, gathering information about their targets' abilities and laying the groundwork for future assaults or ambushes. Against weaker targets or when serving with other hellforged troops in a major battle, glass devils typically function as assassins or skirmishers, striking hard and then fleeing invisibly before their opponents can prepare a counterattack.

This devil's humanoid body is made entirely of transparent glass plates, joined together with jagged ridges and angular joints. Its eyes are mirrorlike orbs, and its fingers are long, needlelike shards of razor-sharp glass.

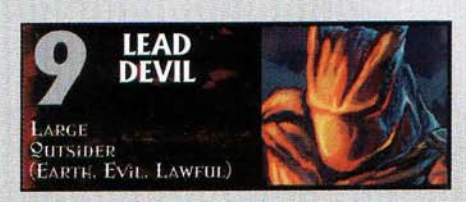
A glass devil's transparent body makes it difficult to detect with normal vision. Often, the creature is noticeable solely because of the distorting refractive effect that its angular body has on objects behind it.

Combat

In battle, glass devils dance just at the edge of their opponents' reach, relying on their natural camouflage to avoid attacks while darting in to stab foes with

their needlelike fingers. If a foe manages to cancel a glass devil's invisibility through magic or some other means, the creature flees rather than enter melee with any save the weakest opponents.

Invisibility (Su): A glass devil's body refracts and bends light, granting the creature a permanent effect like the *improved invisibility* spell.



Hit Dice: 16d8+48 (120 hp)
Initiative: -1
Speed: 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.
AC: 23 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +15 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 23
Attacks: 2 slams +28 melee
Damage: Slam 1d10+13
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Hell's embrace, improved grab
Special Qualities: DR 20/+2, hellforged, immunities (cold, fire), outsider traits, SR 25
Saves: Fort +13, Ref +9, Will +12
Abilities: Str 37, Dex 8, Con 17, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10
Skills: Intimidate +18, Intuit Direction +20, Jump +31, Knowledge (the planes) +19, Listen +20, Search +19, Spot +20, Wilderness Lore +20
Feats: Cleave, Expertise, Improved Disarm, Power Attack, Track

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 13
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always lawful evil
Advancement: 17-32 HD (Large); 33-48 (Huge)

Although ponderous in their thoughts and movements, lead devils are the elite among their hellforged brethren. What they lack in speed they make up with raw strength—it is said that their leaden fists can easily punch through stone walls. When a target is too dangerous for a band of obsidian devils to overcome, or the Dukes of Hell require a more subtle approach to a problem, they dispatch a lead devil to handle the job.

A lead devil has a smooth, human-shaped, muscular-looking body made of lead. Its form is entirely featureless—even its face is blank.

The Dukes of Hell dispatch lead devils to capture prisoners that they want taken alive because these hellforged devils can grapple, hold, and transport even creatures as strong as titans. Skilled at tracking and relentless in pursuit, lead devils are amongst the most feared enforcers in the Nine Hells.

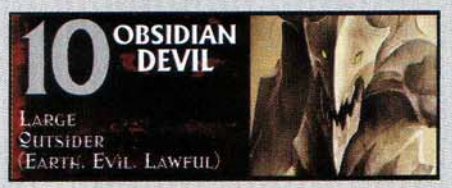
Combat

In battle, lead devils smash their enemies to pieces with their mighty fists. They focus on a single, powerful target until they have battered it into submission.

When assigned to capture a specific creature, a lead devil employs slightly different tactics. Ignoring all other enemies in favor of its target, it smashes through or leaps over barriers to reach its quarry. Once in melee range, the lead devil uses its great strength to grapple its target and then employs its hell's embrace ability to carry off its captive.

Hell's Embrace (Su): When a lead devil grapples an opponent, it can use *dimension door* to transport both itself and the opponent to a place within 500 feet and within sight. If the grappled foe succeeds at a Will save (DC 16) the hell's embrace effect fails and neither creature is transported.

Improved Grab (Ex): If a lead devil hits an opponent that is up to two size categories larger than itself with a slam attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity (grapple bonus +33). If it gets a hold, it can also use its hell's embrace ability in the same round. Thereafter, the creature has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use its hand to hold the opponent (-20 penalty on grapple checks, but the lead devil is not considered grappled). In either case, each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals slam damage.



Hit Dice: 10d8+20 (65 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.
AC: 17 (-1 size, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 17
Attacks: 2 claws +13 melee
Damage: Claw 1d8+4
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Grinding grip 4d6+6, improved grab
Special Qualities: DR 10/+1, hellforged, outsider traits, resistances (cold 20, fire 20), SR 18
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +9
Abilities: Str 19, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills: Balance +10, Climb +14, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +10, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Spot +10
Feats: Blind-Fight, Iron Will, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or squad (3-12)
Challenge Rating: 6
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always lawful evil
Advancement: 11-20 HD (Large); 21-30 HD (Huge)

Brutal even by hell's standards, obsidian devils live for only one goal—to tear enemies to pieces. Who those enemies are makes little difference; these devils are content to attack any target designated by a superior.

An obsidian devil resembles a blocky humanoid composed entirely of black obsidian. Its angular body is covered with razor-sharp ridges and spikes. A grisly patina of torn skin, gore, and other remains of previous victims usually covers these projections.

Obsidian devils serve primarily as the police force of the Nine Hells. Whenever a devil breaks a compact or otherwise violates some portion of hell's complex legal code, a squad of obsidian devils is dispatched to take the miscreant into custody. Obsidian devils are also sent to capture mortals who break diabolic pacts or turn against their devil masters.

Combat

In combat, an obsidian devil uses its long, powerful arms to grab and grapple a foe. Once it establishes a hold, it crushes its captive against the sharp edges of its body, slicing through flesh like a knife through butter. Normally deployed in large groups, obsidian devils overwhelm foes with sheer numbers.

Grinding Grip (Ex): With a successful

grapple check, an obsidian devil can grind its opponent against the sharp ridges and spikes of its body in a vicious bear hug, dealing 4d6+6 points of slashing damage.

Improved Grab (Ex): If an obsidian devil hits an opponent that is at least one size category smaller than itself with both of its claws, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity (grapple bonus +18). If it gets a hold, it can also use its grinding grip in the same round. Alternatively, the obsidian devil has the option to conduct the grapple normally or simply use one claw to hold the opponent (-20 penalty on grapple check, but the obsidian devil is not considered grappled). In either case, each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals grinding grip damage.

Hit Dice: 4d8 (18 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 30 ft., burrow 50 ft.
AC: 16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14
Attacks: 2 claws +4 melee and bite +2 melee
Damage: Claw 1d6, bite 1d4
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Cloud of sand
Special Qualities: DR 5/+1, fire immunity, hellforged, outsider traits, reaching grasp, sand form, SR 14
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +5
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 10
Skills: Balance +4, Disable Device +7, Hide +9, Jump +2, Listen +8, Spot +5, Tumble +9
Feats: Combat Reflexes, Multiattack

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or swarm (3-8)
Challenge Rating: 3
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always lawful evil
Advancement: 5-8 (Medium-size); 9-16 (Large)

Sand devils are the spies and informers of the hellforged legions. Because they can disperse the sand that makes up their bodies over a large area, they can hide almost anywhere—in small holes, sand dunes, or even the nooks and crannies of an archdevil's mansion. Once in position, they lie in hiding until they have collected the information for which they came. Then they quietly shift the sand of their bodies until they can reform in a safe place and report back to their superiors.

The fine, powdery sand that makes up a sand devil's human-shaped body gives its outer surface a rough, grainy look. The creature has leering eyes and a wide mouth filled with needlelike teeth. Its arms and legs appear thin and puny.

Sand devils rarely operate on their own; they are usually found in the employ of an archdevil or lead devil that has a specific spying mission for them. Occasionally sand devils also work with obsidian and coal devils to capture or kill difficult targets. For this function, the sand devil hides in its sand form while its allies drive unsuspecting enemies toward it. As soon as the foes draw close enough, the sand devil leaps to attack, catching the unwary opponent between two forces. Mortals rarely encounter sand devils, although necromancers and diabolists of minor power sometimes employ them as guardians or familiars.

Combat

In battle, sand devils rely on ambush and surprise. Because they are too weak to take on any but the puniest demon or devil in melee, they rarely confront enemies openly. Instead, they lie in hiding and wait for the unsuspecting opponent to pass, then leap to attack. When threatened, sand devils exhale clouds of stinging sand to blind their enemies.

Cloud of Sand (Ex): Once every 1d4 rounds, a sand devil can breathe a 20-foot-long cone of sand. This cloud of debris persists for 1d4 rounds and obscures all sight (including darkvision) beyond 5 feet. A creature within 5 feet has one-half concealment (20% miss chance); creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker cannot use sight to locate the target). Furthermore, every air-breathing creature caught within the sand cloud must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 12) each round or take 1d6 points of damage from choking on sand and dust.

Reaching Grasp (Ex): A sand devil's long, slender arms grant it a reach of 10 feet with claw attacks.

Sand Form (Su): As a move-equivalent action, a sand devil can transform itself into a patch or cloud of sand. This has the same effect as a *gaseous form* spell, except that the sand devil gains a +10 circumstance bonus to Hide checks and moves at a speed of 5 feet.

Hit Dice: 9d8+18 (58 hp)

Initiative: +0
Speed: 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.
AC: 19 (-1 size, +10 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 19
Attacks: 2 slams +11 melee
Damage: Slam 1d8+3
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Hail of spikes, piercing grapple
Special Qualities: DR 20/+2, fire resistance 20, hellforged, outsider traits, SR 18
Saves: Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +6
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 11, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills: Climb +15, Intimidate +12, Jump +6, Listen +12, Search +11, Spot +12
Feats: Cleave, Power Attack, Sunder

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or band (3-8)
Challenge Rating: 6
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always lawful evil
Advancement: 10-18 (Large); 19-27 (Huge)

Spiked devils are forged from iron mined within the realm of Dispater, the Iron Duke. They are poorly suited for fighting alongside other devils because they tend to catch allies in their spike attacks, so they typically serve as sentries and guardians.

A spiked devil's body has a head, a torso, two arms, and two legs, but there the resemblance to a humanoid form ends. The fact that each body part is nearly spherical gives the creature a lumbering appearance and a graceless stride. Its chest, arms, and legs are dotted with hundreds of sharp, iron spikes.

Some necromancers and diabolists who have especially pleased an archdevil are granted spiked devils as servitors. These evil spellcasters use the creatures to guard their towers and watch over their treasures.

Combat

Spiked devils typically begin combat by spraying the area with spikes projected from their bodies. Then they close for melee and attempt to grapple opponents, using their spikes to cut and rend flesh.

Hail of Spikes (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, a spiked devil can project a 30-foot cone of sharp spikes from its body. Every creature in the area takes 3d4 points of piercing damage (Reflex DC 16 avoids). These spikes are a living part of the devil's body, and they continue to burrow into the victim's flesh for 3 rounds after striking, dealing 1d4 points of additional damage per round. A successful Heal check (DC 20) or the application of any healing magic kills the burrowing spikes and stops the continuing damage. The damage from multiple successful hail of spikes attacks is cumulative (that is, a creature that fails its saves against hail of spikes attacks from two spiked devils takes 6d4 points of damage initially and 2d4 points of damage for each of 3 rounds thereafter). However, only one successful Heal check is required to kill all the spikes in the victim's body.

Piercing Grapple (Ex): With a successful grapple check (grapple bonus +16), a spiked devil can crush an opponent against its body, dealing 2d8+4 points of piercing damage.

BATTLELOTHS

Other yugoloths may serve their employers and superiors as mercenaries, bodyguards, and torturers, but the battleloths literally serve as tools for their masters to exploit. Each of these creatures can take the form of a particular weapon, such as a sword, axe, or crossbow. In this form, the battleloth can be wielded in combat by its master. In general, a battleloth is at its best when used to strike an opponent, then released to take humanoid form and continue attacking on its own. Although this tactic forces the creature's master to draw a second weapon in order to continue fighting, some demons and devils consider the element of surprise worth the inconvenience of having to carry an extra blade.

Battleloths are wily, cunning creatures whose allegiance can be purchased by the highest bidder at any time. Now and then a wielder comes to regret striking a bargain with a battleloth when opponents on the field bid higher for the creature's services in the midst of a fight. Battleloths love gold, gems, magic items, and other valuables. They are hard bargainers, and they always insist upon receiving at least half their payment in advance. Both player characters and NPCs can employ battleloths. To contact and bind one of these creatures, a character must use the appropriate *planar ally* spell or hire a spellcaster to cast it on his or her behalf.

BATTLELOTHS ARE WILY, CUNNING CREATURES WHOSE ALLEGIANCE CAN BE PURCHASED BY THE HIGHEST BIDDER AT ANY TIME.

Combat

Most battleloths enjoy combat, but they do not take foolish risks on the field. They usually remain in their weapon forms until they strike opponents, then they might change to humanoid form and continue the attack on their own or remain in weapon form, as desired. All battleloths have the following special qualities and abilities.

Weapon Form: A battleloth can change to or from its weapon form as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. While in its weapon form, a battleloth functions as a weapon of the appropriate type with the indicated enhancement bonus. It can use only those movement forms and attacks specifically noted in its weapon form description, but all of its special qualities apply to both its weapon and its humanoid forms. A battleloth can perceive the world around it and communicate normally while in weapon form. Since it lacks limbs, however, it

cannot use spells that require material or somatic components.

In all other respects, the battleloth functions as a creature, not an object. It gains no hardness or additional hit points in weapon form, and any spells, attacks, or effects that specifically target it are resolved as if they had been used against the creature's humanoid form except that the battleloth benefits from a +2 size bonus to AC.

Outsider Traits: A battleloth has darkvision (60-foot range). It cannot be raised or resurrected.

Yugoloth Traits: A battleloth is immune to poison and acid. It has cold, electricity, and fire resistance 20. Battleloths can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.

Battleloth Characters

A battleloth's favored class is fighter. As creatures created for war, they excel at learning complex combat maneuvers and battle tactics. Some battleloths also learn magic, usually studying as wizards. Battleloths with class levels rarely hire themselves out to other creatures; they prefer to work as equal partners with demons, devils, blackguards, evil clerics, and other villains instead.

Hit Dice: 1d8 (4 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect)
AC: 16 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 13
Attacks: 2 claws +2 melee
Damage: Claw 1d3
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Arrow form, DR 5/+1, outsider traits, SR 12, yugoloth traits
Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4
Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11
Skills: Craft (fletching) +4, Spot +6
Feats: Dodge

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or quiver (3-20)
Challenge Rating: 1
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: By character class

The weakest of the battleloths, these creatures are sniveling, whiny, and prone to nitpick at the language of their contracts in an effort to avoid service. Most arrow battleloths consider serving as living ammunition to be the only combat duty required of them. Therefore, they often refuse to take humanoid form and continue fighting after being fired unless the target is an obviously weak opponent such as a wizard or sorcerer.

In weapon form, the arrow battleloth looks like a barbed-steel missile. In its true form, it resembles a brown-skinned, feathered humanoid with steel arrowheads set on its fingertips like claws.

Arrow battleloths are often hired to serve as spies. On such a mission, the creature inserts itself into a target's quiver, then watches and listens, gathering all the information it can about the target's strategies, plans, and comrades. When drawn from the quiver and fired, the battleloth alters its course to land out of sight, shifts into its humanoid form, and scuttles away to report back to its master.

Combat

Though these battleloths are generally poor combatants, they are quite useful for harrying enemy spellcasters. If encountered without a master, arrow battleloths do whatever it takes to avoid danger. They normally flee at the first sign of trouble, but they have been known to gather in small packs to overwhelm and loot weak or injured targets.

Arrow Form (Su): When fired from a bow, an arrow battleloth can turn at any point in its flight to attack an opponent who had cover or concealment, or was otherwise out of the bow wielder's line of sight. As soon as the battleloth spots the desired target, it can use its flying ability to adjust its course, so long as it does not move beyond the maximum range of the weapon used to fire it. The attacker makes a normal attack roll against the target to see whether the battleloth hits, ignoring any miss chances or AC bonuses that would otherwise apply for concealment or cover. Otherwise, the arrow battleloth functions as a *+1 arrow*. Although it can turn into an arrow and fly on its own, an arrow battleoth cannot attack in arrow form without being fired from a bow.

Hit Dice: 3d8+3 (16 hp)
Initiative: +0
Speed: 20 ft.
AC: 15 (+1 size, +4 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 15
Attacks: Gore +5 melee
Damage: Gore 1d6+1
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Axe form, DR 5/+1, outsider traits, SR 14, yugoloth traits
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2
Abilities: Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 10
Skills: Climb +7, Craft (weaponsmithing) +5, Intimidate +6, Jump +4
Feats: Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary or squad (3-18)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: By character class

Axe battleloths enjoy battle and are eager to continue fighting, whether in humanoid form or weapon form. In combat, an axe battleloth can bite its target without taking humanoid form after its master buries it in an opponent's flesh.

In its weapon form, an axe battleloth looks like a greataxe forged from bronze, with spikes set on its head and a leering face engraved on its blade. Along the blade's edge is a wicked-looking fanged mouth. In its true form, the creature looks like a small, gray humanoid with a sharp, bony ridge on its forehead that it can use to chop into its enemies.

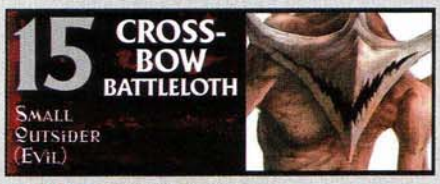
Axe battleloths are notoriously dense and simpleminded, and their communication is limited to short, simple words. Their employment negotiations usually consist of simply repeating their demands over and over again until their potential employer either agrees to their terms or cuts off the discussion.

Combat

Axe battleloths love combat. When wielded in battle, they eagerly snap their fangs at their enemies and urge their employers to charge forward and attack.

When not employed, axe battleloths spend their time sharpening their bony ridges and using them to hack into rocks, wood, or other objects for pleasure. Should any visitor annoy them, they charge to the attack, relying on reckless bravery to overcome the perceived foe.

Axe Form (Su): While in its weapon form, the axe battleloth functions as a *+1 greataxe*. The fanged mouth set along its edge allows the creature to make a bite attack (+5 melee) without assuming humanoid form each time its wielder successfully hits an enemy with it (maximum once per round). This bite is in addition to the wielder's attack and deals 1d4 points of damage on a successful hit.



Hit Dice: 4d8 (18 hp)
Initiative: +1
Speed: 20 ft., fly 80 ft. (perfect)
AC: 15 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 14
Attacks: Bite +5 melee, or bone shard +6 ranged
Damage: Bite 1d3, bone shard 1d6
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities: Battleloth traits, bone shards, crossbow form, DR 5/+1, outsider traits, SR 15, yugoloth traits
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +4
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills: Disable Device +7, Open Lock +8, Listen +7, Sense Motive +4, Spot +7
Feats: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or squad (3-12)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: By character class

Because of their versatility and utility in battle, crossbow battleloths are perhaps the most highly sought after of all battleloths. Like arrow battleloths, they do not particularly enjoy combat, though they usually don't take any special pains to avoid it.

In weapon form, a crossbow battleloth appears as a wood-and-iron light crossbow with a leering, demonic face where the bow joins to the stock. In its true form, it resembles a pale-skinned humanoid with an overly wide mouth.

Crossbow battleloths are pragmatic creatures that consider it their place to provide a service and nothing more. They feel no loyalty or attachment to their employers. If a crossbow battleloth wishes to break its bond to its current master, it blatantly informs foes how much gold it will take to buy away its loyalty. If its employer becomes angry and attacks it, the crossbow battleloth uses this "betrayal" as an excuse to return home and keep its payment.

Combat

The wielder of a crossbow battleloth can lay down a steady stream of fire because of the creature's ability to facilitate reloading. In humanoid form, a crossbow battleloth spits sharp fragments of bone at enemies as a ranged attack, or it bites in melee combat. Usually it assumes humanoid form and scurries away to fire bone fragments at opponents after its master drops it in favor of a melee weapon.

When encountered without an employer, crossbow battleloths prefer to snipe at their enemies from a distance.

Bone Shards (Ex): A crossbow battleloth can create a sharp shard of bone in its mouth and spit it at opponents as a ranged attack. This attack has a range increment of 80 feet.

Crossbow Form (Su): When used as a weapon, a crossbow battleloth functions as a *+1 light crossbow*. It grants its wielder the use of the Precise Shot feat (whether or not the prerequisite is met) because it uses its own skill to help guide each shot. In addition, the creature can cock its own bowstring and prepare itself to fire, allowing its user to reload it as a free action. This action can be taken more than once per round, allowing characters with multiple attacks to attack multiple times in a round.

Hit Dice: 2d8 (9 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 20 ft.
AC: 15 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 13

Attacks: Bite +5 melee
Damage: Bite 1d3 plus blood drain
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Attach, blood drain
Special Qualities: Battleloth traits, DR 5/+1, outsider traits, pick form, SR 12, yugoloth traits
Saves: Fort +3 Ref +5, Will +3
Abilities: Str 11, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills: Bluff +5, Diplomacy +2, Hide +11, Intimidate +4
Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or mob (3-12)
Challenge Rating: 2
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: By character class

Pick battleloths are vicious, predatory yugoloths that feed on the blood of living creatures. Always hungry, they are eager to strike bargains for employment, so long as their employer promises plenty of combat.

In weapon form, a pick battleloth looks like a heavy pick crafted from brass. Close inspection reveals that the head is hollow, and there is a tiny hole in the point. In its true form, the creature looks like a slender, long-limbed humanoid with a long, mosquitolike proboscis that it uses to drain blood.

These creatures are the most active of all the battleloths when not in the employ of masters. Pick battleloths wander the planes, seeking out warfare wherever it occurs. When they find a pitched battle, they lurk at the edges of the fight and feed on the blood of injured, weakened, or dying combatants.

Combat

Pick battleloths are eager combatants—so eager, in fact, that they are sometimes difficult to control. It is not uncommon for a pick battleloth's thirst for blood to overcome its sense of discipline, leading it to forget its contract in the ecstasy of blood-drinking. For this reason, a pick battleloth's master usually allows it to latch on to the first opponent it hits and drain blood to its evil heart's content.

When not employed, pick battleloths lurk in hiding and wait to pounce on unsuspecting victims. Small and physically weak, they rely primarily on surprise to latch onto victims so that they can drain blood.

Attach (Ex): When a pick battleloth in either weapon or humanoid form scores a hit on a target, it latches onto the opponent's body, automatically grappling it. An attached pick battleloth begins draining blood when that it assumes humanoid form (see below). While attached, the pick battleloth has an AC of 13. An attached pick battleloth can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To escape a grapple with an attached pick battleloth, the opponent must achieve a pin against it.

Blood Drain (Ex): Once it is attached, a pick battleloth in humanoid form can drain the opponent's blood, automatically dealing 1d4 points of Constitution damage per round of attachment. The creature does not willingly detach until it has killed the victim.

Pick Form (Su): While in weapon form, a pick battleloth functions as a *+1 heavy pick*. As soon as it scores a hit in combat, it attaches to the victim's body as noted above. Thereafter, it usually assumes humanoid form and begins draining blood. Many a victim has been horrified to see the pick head embedded in its flesh transform into the proboscis of a monstrous creature.

Hit Dice: 3d8 (13 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: 20 ft.
AC: 18 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +4 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 15
Attacks: 2 chains +7 melee
Damage: Chain 1d6+3
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Constrict 1d6+4, improved grab
Special Qualities: Battleloth traits, DR 5/+1, outsider traits, spiked chain form, SR 13, trip, yugoloth traits
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +3
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10
Skills: Climb +9, Jump +9, Listen +6, Spot +6
Feats: Dodge

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

POWER FANTASY

by JD Wiker · illustrated by Stan Shaw

Action-Movie Stunts in D&D

When was the last time your character swung from a chandelier, toppled an ancient idol onto pursuers, or held open the jaws of a trap? For that matter, has your character ever sliced through a tied-off rope and let the weight attached to the other end pull her up into the air like a one-way elevator?

All these showy stunts are pretty standard fare for action/adventure movies—"blood and thunder" fantasy at its swashbuckling best—but they rarely appear in DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventures. Usually, that's because Dungeon Masters are absolutely baffled when players declare that their characters are trying action-movie stunts like these. Does swinging on a chandelier require a Dexterity check, or is it some new use of the Tumble skill? What if the character decides to pull that nearby scaffolding down on top of the pursuing villains? Sure, a Strength check would cover the attempt—but how much damage do the villains take on a success?

Faced with such dilemmas, an inexperienced DM might simply declare that the desired stunt can't be done. But, forearmed with a little guidance on how to handle such situations, the DM can be ready for just about any over-the-top heroics the players try. Better still, she can even *plan* for it.

FEATS OF STRENGTH

The first fantasy adventure heroes we encounter in books and movies are usually the big, muscle-bound barbarians. From Conan of Cimmeria to Tarzan of the Apes, the "more brawn than brains" set has a certain appeal to the strong, silent type that lurks deep within a lot of us. What sets them apart from the average heroes in an adventure is that they are the "go-to" people when heavy gates need to be lifted, massive statues need to be toppled, and the slavering jaws of gigantic monsters need to be pried forcefully apart.

Pick-Ups and Put-Downs

Page one of the Muscular Hero's Operating Manual might just read: "When all else fails, drop something really heavy on your opponent. When faced with multiple opponents, pick one up and hit the rest of them with him." Flexing that Strength score is a popular pastime, and a quick look at the rules for falling objects in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* reveals that a nice, heavy slab of rock, dumped from 30 feet up or so, is the muscular hero's version of a *fireball.*

Bringing Down the House

Scenery can be extraordinarily useful, provided that it's not bolted down. A toppled statue or other object can block an enemy's charge, cut off a foe's escape, or just fall on top of a villain and ruin her day. Fortunately for the muscular hero, getting scenery to topple isn't much more complicated than making a Strength check. It's the DC for the Strength check that the DM needs to know before allowing the players to pull this stunt.

The Falling Objects Table below provides the Strength check DC to topple an object of a given weight, along with how much damage it deals when it falls on top of something else, and examples of what sort of objects might be in that weight category. The base damage ratings given on the table assume a 10-foot drop and are

When was the last time your character swung from a chandelier?

based on the rules for falling objects in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Bonus damage might also apply for additional distance fallen (+1d6 points per 10 feet beyond the minimum distance required to deal damage at all, to a maximum of +20d6). One key point to remember is that an object weighing less than 200 pounds has to fall farther than 10 feet before it deals any damage. How much farther depends on how much less it weighs; see the footnotes for the appropriate entries on the table.

The Strength check DCs in the table are derived from the rules in the *Player's Handbook* on carrying capacities (specifically, how much a character can push or drag). The DM can and should modify these DCs if the object is top-heavy or unbalanced in some fashion. A precariously balanced boulder, for example, might reduce the DC by as much as 10. Likewise, a scaffold with most of its weight at the top could decrease the DC by 5. Objects that are firmly attached to something else (parts of a statue, for example) must first be broken off with a separate Strength check or somehow cut loose before they can be dropped. (See Chapter 4 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more information on Break DCs, hardness, and object hit points.)

Toppling an object takes a lot of exertion, so it requires a full-round action regardless of the object's weight.

For example, imagine that Krusk has made his way to the top of a ruined parapet, where the battlements have crumbled away because of exposure to the weather. On the ground 20 feet below him is the shambling mound that chased him up there. Krusk notices that the shambler is directly below a loose section of battlement, so he decides to push the bit of masonry off onto the creature.

The DM decides that the battlement section weighs about 800 pounds, so Krusk needs a result of 21 or better on his Strength check to push it over the wall and drop it on the shambling mound. Krusk has a Strength score of 18 (+4 ability modifier), so he needs to roll 17 or better to shift the heavy stone. Heaving and grunting, he finally manages to tip it over after several tries. It plummets down on top of the shambler, dealing 5d6 points of damage—4d6 for its weight, +1d6 for the additional 10 feet of distance that it fell.

Of Flightless Mammals

Falling damage can be the best way to hurt an enemy that has a high Armor Class because of armor, or one that has just enough damage reduction to be a problem. A fall from a height of only 10 feet is just as damaging as a hit from a short sword; a fall from a height of 20 feet is like being stabbed with a greatsword. But if a troublesome opponent just refuses to fall into that handy 20-foot-deep pit, he might need a helping hand.

The option of throwing an opponent isn't specifically covered by the D&D grappling rules, but it's a wonderfully effective tactic when there's a long fall conveniently close by or when the thrower is exceptionally strong. To allow for this stunt, just add "throwing an opponent" to the list of options available to a grappling character who has pinned an opponent. As the foe remains pinned only for one round, the pinning character must use a subsequent attack to use the throw action.

When you choose the throwing option, you can always simply drop the pinned foe prone in your square (or in any square you occupy, if your face is greater than 5 feet by 5 feet). But if distance is your desire, assume that you can throw an opponent weighing no more than one-third of your light load rating out of your

FALLING OBJECTS TABLE

Weight of Object	Strength Check DC	Falling Damage[1]	Example
up to 50 lb.	6	0[2]	Tiny stone statue, wooden ladder, chest containing 1,000 coins
51-100 lb.	7	0[3]	Diminutive gold statue
101-150 lb.	8	0[4]	Small wooden statue
151-200 lb.	9	1d6	Small stone statue, Large scaffold, wooden cart
201-250 lb.	10	1d6	Tiny gold statue
251-300 lb.	11	1d6	Medium-size wooden statue, wooden sled
301-350 lb.	12	1d6	Small stone obelisk
351-400 lb.	13	2d6	Medium stone statue, wooden wagon
401-450 lb.	14	2d6	Medium stone obelisk
451-500 lb.	15	2d6	
501-550 lb.	16	2d6	Large wooden statue
551-600 lb.	17	3d6	Small gold statue
601-650 lb.	18	3d6	
651-700 lb.	19	3d6	Huge scaffold
701-750 lb.	20	3d6	
751-800 lb.	21	4d6	Medium-size stone column
801-850 lb.	22	4d6	Huge wooden statue
851-900 lb.	23	4d6	Wooden ballista
901-950 lb.	24	4d6	
951-1,000 lb.	25	5d6	Large stone statue
+200 lb.	+4	+1d6	

[1] Based on a 10-foot fall.

[2] This amount of weight requires at least a 40-foot fall to deal 1d6 points of damage.

3 This amount of weight requires at least a 30-foot fall to deal 1d6 points of damage.

4 This amount of weight requires at least a 20-foot fall to deal 1d6 points of damage.

square. If you're actually trying to hit a specific spot, treat the opponent as an improvised ranged weapon—that is, you take a -4 nonproficiency penalty on the attack roll and your range increment is 10 feet. If you're large enough, you might even be able to make the throw with one hand, provided that the opponent is no larger or heavier than a weapon you could use one-handed. If you can throw the opponent one-handed, doing so requires only an attack action; otherwise the act of throwing takes the rest of your actions for the round.

You can throw an opponent that is larger than one-third of your light load rating—just not effectively. To determine the base distance the opponent travels, make a Strength check. The base distance is 5 feet plus 1 foot for every 2 points by which your Strength check result exceeds 10. Then compare the opponent's weight with your load ratings and consult the table below to determine the total distance thrown.

Opponent's Weight	Total Distance Thrown
Less than your light load but more than 1/3 your light load	Triple base distance
Less than your medium load but morethan your light load	Double base distance
Less than your maximum load but more than your medium load	Base distance
Less than the maximum weight you can lift off the ground but more than your maximum load	No more than 5 feet

When you want to throw an opponent at a specific target (such as another foe), make an ordinary attack roll and then roll a Strength check to see if you can throw the creature far enough to hit the target. Treat the thrown creature as an improvised weapon with a range increment of 10 feet. If your attack would reach the foe but misses, the creature thrown lands prone in the target's square.

If you're aiming at a square, use the rules for grenadelike weapons, but do not roll for deviation unless you miss and threw the opponent more than 5 feet. Using these rules means that your opponent could actually land farther away than you intended, depending on the deviation roll. If anyone is in the square where your opponent lands, that character (not the thrown opponent) may attempt a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid being struck.

The damage dealt by an opponent used as a thrown weapon equals 1d6 points per 200 pounds of the opponent's weight plus your Strength bonus. Apply this damage to both the thrown opponent and the target. If the result of your throwing attempt allows you to toss an opponent into a square where the ground is lower (such as a pit), add the falling damage for the drop in elevation to the damage from the throw.

For example, suppose Krusk (a 10th-level barbarian with a Strength score of 23) is grappling with an orc. Since the DM has ruled that the orc with all of his equipment weighs 300 pounds, he is too heavy for Krusk to hurl like a missile in one hand. But Krusk succeeds at his grapple check to pin the orc and elects to throw the orc as far as he can toward a nearby chasm (about 25 feet away), preventing him from taking other actions for the rest of the round. Krusk rolls 19 for his Strength check and adds +6 for his Strength modifier, giving him a check result of 25. Krusk adds only 1 foot of distance for every 2 points by which he beat the DC of 10. Thus his base distance for the throw is 5 feet (minimum) plus 7 feet (extra distance for beating the DC by 15), for a total of 12 feet. Because the orc's weight is less than Krusk's medium load but more than his light load, that distance is doubled to 24 feet—not quite far enough to reach the chasm. But since Krusk wasn't throwing the orc at another creature, the throw is treated as an attack with a grenadelike weapon, so there's still a slim chance that a deviation roll might send the orc tumbling into the chasm anyway. In either case, the orc is going to take at least 1d6+6 points of damage. If he does fall into the chasm, he also takes falling damage based on the length of the drop.

SET DRESSING: TOPPLERS

Having trouble injecting opportunities for using these rules into your adventures? Try some of the following concepts.

- A town square could include an old stone marker (601-650 pounds), a few unattended wagons (351-400 pounds), a rickety merchant's stall (151-200 pounds), or maybe even an old, crumbling battlement on a rampart overlooking the square (751-800 pounds).
- A dungeon setting could feature an old statue (701-750 pounds), a wooden door off its hinges (101-150 pounds), a crumbling section of wall (951-1,000 pounds), a solid gold idol (851-900 pounds), or maybe just a gold-foil-covered wooden idol (301-350 pounds).
- A wilderness area could offer a fallen tree (901-950 pounds) or a loose boulder (nearly any weight).

ADRIAN! CATCH ME!

Throwing opponents has a rich tradition in heroic fantasy. Greek heroes were particularly fond of wrestling, which—if the various movies about Hercules are any indication—usually involved flinging one's foes around. But people get tossed around as a matter of course in more modern films as well. Sylvester Stallone gets hurled out of the ring in *Rocky III*. Gary Busey throws Mel Gibson onto the hood of a police car in the original *Lethal Weapon*. And one of the most famous "throw the bad guy to his death" scenes done in the past twenty years has to be the one in which Darth Vader flings the shrieking Emperor into the power core of the Death Star in *Return of the Jedi*.

TUMBLING DOWN

The movie called *The Four Musketeers* features an exciting scene about midway through the film. The title characters, accompanied by D'Artagnan's faithful manservant Planchet, fight off a small horde of enemy soldiers at the siege of La Rochelle. When the attackers threaten to swarm up the ruined wall to where the musketeers are trying to have breakfast (on a wager, actually), the heroes put their backs to the wall and push a ton or so of masonry down on their enemies.

This kind of maneuver, of course, got its start in the biblical tale of Samson and Delilah. The image of a blinded Samson, chained between two pillars and pushing against them to bring down the entire arena, has burned itself into our collective subconscious. Thus, such maneuvers make for great storytelling.

SQUISH!

In the classic trash compactor scene from the movie *Star Wars*, Luke, Han, Leia, and Chewie try everything they can think of to keep the walls from closing in on them—including using a cast-off stanchion as a brace. That tactic almost certainly gained them a circumstance bonus.

SET DRESSING: CRUSHERS

Traditional traps aren't the only crushing mechanisms that can close in on a hero. The DM can also make use of the same mechanics to represent otherwise mundane accidents. For example, a runaway cart could pin characters to a wall, or a collapsing wall could threaten to crush them. A falling tree could land atop a PC, or floating timber could grind adventurers between massive logs (or force them to go underwater). Broken ice on a frozen river could have much the same effect.

SWINGING HEROES

Who can forget Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia swinging across the gap in the original *Star Wars* movie? Or Tom Cruise as Jack in *Legend*, swinging down from the gallery to battle Darkness and rescue the lovely Lily? Kevin Costner did it several times in *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*, and Bruce Campbell did it as part of a bull rush in *Army of Darkness*. Johnny Weismuller swung on vines so many times in the old *Tarzan* movies (from 1932 to 1948) that the "Tarzan yell" has almost become a requirement for the stunt!

SET DRESSING: SWINGERS

With a little imagination, you can visualize nearly any hanging object as something to swing from. A huge tapestry on a wall, for example, might work much like a rope if you could tear one side loose and you didn't mind swinging directly along the wall. Chains work just as well as rope, and chandeliers, hanging plants, and even the clothing of really, really tall opponents can provide a convenient lines from which to swing.

Open Wide!

Mighty heroes don't let little things like barred gates and locked doors get in their way. The *Dungeon Master's Guide* provides rules for breaking everything from locks to walls, but what if you're not trying to break something? What if you're only trying to keep the portcullis from dropping, or keep a crushing room trap from closing in?

The DM should decide when the ability of a trap to deal damage depends upon the closing of some mechanism, such as a spring-loaded trap. In either case, a strong character can pit her might against the power of the trap and possibly put off certain death—at least for a little while.

The Jaws of Life

Certain mechanical traps deal damage by applying pressure—either suddenly (in the case of traps that make attack rolls) or slowly (in the case of traps that have onset delays). The crushing wall, scything blade, and portcullis traps described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are all examples of this sort of trap. In each case, a particularly strong hero might be able to react quickly enough to prevent the trap from dealing its damage.

If the trap has an onset delay, a character in the path of the mechanism can, as a standard action, try to halt its progress temporarily. If the trap doesn't have an onset delay, the character must be in position and also have a readied action to halt the mechanism.

Applying one's muscles to defeating a trap is a risky proposition. The character must make a successful Strength check each round to restrain the mechanism. The DC for the check equals the DC of a Disable Device check to defeat the trap, even though delaying the trap's action by sheer muscle power does not actually disable it. If the Strength check succeeds, the character has restrained the mechanism for that round. As soon as the character fails a Strength check or lets go, the trap resumes its normal operation.

The precise result of restraining a trap's mechanism depends on how it operates (see below). In any case, the best the muscle-bound hero can achieve is to delay the inevitable—though that delay might buy just enough time for a rogue to actually disable the trap.

Attack Roll: If a trap uses an attack roll to determine the outcome, a successful Strength check prevents it from attacking that round. Once the restraining character either fails a Strength check or lets go, the trap makes its attack roll normally unless it has been disabled. Certain traps of this sort (such as those that use bladed weapons) cannot be defeated in this fashion.

Saving Throw: If a mechanical trap allows the targets a Reflex saving throw, a successful Strength check grants everyone in harm's way a +5 circumstance bonus on that save. Any creature that does not remove itself from the dangerous area before the restraining character either fails a Strength check or chooses to let go suffers the full effects of the trap, as though it had failed its save.

Onset Delay: If a mechanical trap has an onset delay, a successful Strength check halves its damage. Until the mechanism is otherwise disabled, however, any characters in the trap's area take that damage every round.

ROPE TRICKS

Every dashing action hero—from Batman and Luke Skywalker to Zorro and the Three Musketeers—knows that a good length of rope is the best tool in his arsenal against boring entrances and humdrum heroics. Ropes and grapples whisk the heroes up to the unguarded roof of the villain's lair. Then some conveniently dangling ropes let them whip past hordes of bloodthirsty henchmen to land gracefully beside their arch-nemesis—with any luck, while the fiend is still cackling about all those henchmen blocking their way!

Rope-Swinging

A rope-swing made to move a distance or to clear an obstacle is really just an equipment-assisted jump. Like standard jumps, this tactic can move you across pits, over low fences, up into the low branches of a tree, or down safely from a height.

When you swing on a rope or similar flexible object, you move in a straight line that passes under where the rope is affixed to a spot double the distance from where you are to a point level with you but beneath where the rope is attached, assuming your swing does not bring you in contact with the ground or another large object. You must make a Climb check (DC 10 with two hands, DC 15 if you hold the rope with one) to successfully complete the swing and land safely at your destination or maintain your hold on the rope after it completes its first swing. A failure by 5 or more results in you losing your grip on the rope at some point during the swing. If you

are near an object (such as a ledge) or the length of the rope allows, you can make a Reflex save (Dc 15) to catch onto the object or rope and prevent yourself from falling, much like if you failed to jump across a pit. A failure by less than 5 results in you landing prone at your destination. The distance you cover in a swing counts toward the distance you can move during a round just as the distance of a jump counts.

A character might be required to jump to reach a rope or might wish to jump once the rope has completed its swing. If the rope swings you more than 20 feet and you jump in the direction the rope swings you, you may count the jump from the rope as a running jump. Otherwise, a jump from the rope is considered a standing jump. When you long jump to grasp a distant rope and swing on it, the maximum distance you can swing is equal to the length of the rope from where you grabbed it to the point where it is affixed.

If you attack a creature while swinging on a rope, your movement stops. On the following round, you may continue the swing or drop off the rope, making another Climb check to determine your success at holding the rope. If you have Spring Attack, you can swing, attack, and then continue your swing, assuming you have enough movement to do so. You provoke attacks of opportunity normally when swinging on a rope, and you can use the Tumble skill to avoid such attacks. Note that in most cases, a swing on a rope occurs in an arc that has its lowest point directly beneath where the rope is affixed, and this can change the number of creatures that can reach the character. You are counted as climbing while swinging on a rope (attackers gain a +2 bonus to hit, you do not gain your Dexterity bonus to AC, and you must succeed at a Climb check when damaged or you lose your grip on the rope), but you can use a shield if you swing using the other hand.

You can release the rope at any point in the swing and fall the appropriate distance, taking damage normally. This might allow a character to swing down from a height and take no damage.

The rope's momentum slows after the first swing. If you hang onto the rope after it completes its first swing, it swings back, but you move 5 less feet of distance away from the point where the rope is affixed. This process continues with each swing until the rope stops swinging beneath the point where it is affixed.

For example, a swashbuckling Lidda grabs a rope that is affixed to the ceiling of a cavern to swing across a chasm and attack an orc that's standing on the opposite side. Lidda would have to travel 20 feet forward to be beneath the point where the rope is affixed, so she can swing 40 feet across the chasm, which is just enough to put her within reach of the orc she wants to attack. Lidda grabs the rope with one hand and swings. She succeeds at the DC 15 Climb check and swings across. This counts as a double move for her because her speed is only 20 ft, and she chooses to maintain her hold on the rope. She succeeds in reaching the orc, but it is ready for her and attacks on its initiative. Lidda is counted as climbing while swinging, and the orc hits, dealing damage and causing Lidda to make a Climb check (DC 15) to maintain her hold on the rope. She succeeds. When it's Lidda's turn again, she attacks the orc but fails to kill it and swings back. The orc makes an attack of opportunity but misses Lidda. She makes her second Climb check to maintain her hold on the rope and succeeds, halting her movement for the round below where the rope is attached because she can only move 20 feet after attacking. On the following round, she continues her swing, but swings only 15 feet. Knowing she can't jump 10 feet or land in the orc's square when she swings back again, she tries to jump to the ledge from which she started. This counts as a running jump; although she traveled only 15 feet this round, the distance swung last round in the same direction is still fuelling her momentum. She makes her Jump check and succeeds in bridging the intervening 5 feet.

Going Up!

Why bother running up the stairs when there's a perfectly good rope close at hand? A character looking for a quick (or quiet) way up has several options: grappling hooks, a bow and arrow, or perhaps even a nice, stout rope attached to a good-sized counterweight.

Grappling Hooks

The basic tool for an impromptu Climb check is the grappling hook. You can attach it to a length of rope, toss it up until it catches some handy projection on the wall, tug to make sure it's secure, and then just climb the trailing rope. All you

GRAPPLING HOOK HEROICS

The most famous example of this sort of maneuver might be Luke Skywalker, but the tactic is certainly not limited to science fantasy; countless heist movies have featured burglars using grappling hooks to get up on the roofs of museums, jewelry stores, or palatial mansions.

GRAPPLE-FIRING CROSSBOW

This device helps adventurers scale unclimbable walls, bridge chasms, escape down sheer cliffs, and the like. A grapple-firing crossbow is a heavy crossbow modified to fire a special, grapple-headed metal bolt attached to 100 feet of thin, light rope.

A successful shot at an appropriate target (see the Attack an Object section in Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*) indicates that the grapple has hooked onto something, anchoring the rope firmly enough for a character to ascend it with a successful Climb check (DC 15). Failure brings one of three results: that the grapple simply failed to snag anything, that it has lodged but is not secure enough to support a character's weight, or that there's simply nothing up there for it to catch. In the first case, the user can simply recoil the rope and try again. In the second case, a successful Use Rope check (DC 15) made before anyone tries to climb reveals the instability. The user cannot free that grapple but may try to fire another. (Should anyone try to climb the unstable rope, the grapple gives way after the climber has progressed 1d10 feet. Determine damage normally for the resulting fall.) In the third case, retries automatically fail.

A character can easily anchor a grapple-bolt by hand in a niche or use pitons to secure it on smooth stone. This provides the same aid for descent without the need to fire the weapon.

Crossbow, Grapple-Firing	
Simple Ranged Weapon	
Cost	70 gp
Damage	1d3
Critical	–
Range Increment	120 ft.
Weight	12 lb.
Type	Piercing
Hardness	10
Hit Points	10

SET DRESSING: HOOKS

It's not the grappling hook, it's how you use it. Items on which a grappling hook can catch could include tall statues, rafters, deeply embedded spears or throwing axes, and particularly unfortunate sentries, as well as rocky outcroppings, crenellations, wall buttresses, and windows.

ANTISOCIAL CLIMBING

The best example of the arrow, string, and rope stunt was featured in the movie *Flesh and Blood* (also known as *The Rose and the Sword*), with Rutger Hauer and Jennifer Jason Leigh. The late, great Brion James employed this trick to get Hauer and Leigh to the top of a castle turret. Hauer and Leigh, of course, are so lazy that rather than climb up the wall themselves once the rope is in place, they made the rest of Hauer's band of brutal mercenaries use the rope to *pull* them up to the top! Of course, the whole reason they wanted to get atop the turret in the first place was so that they could sneak inside, kill everyone, and seize the castle. Thus it's perhaps not quite accurate to call the trick "heroic," but you get the idea.

Jeff Bridges used the same technique a bit more heroically in *The Fisher King*. He employed, ironically enough, a toy bow and arrow set, with a boat anchor for the grappling hook!

EARLY ELEVATORS

Bruce Campbell, as Ash in the movie *Army of Darkness*, used this trick to quickly reach the parapet of King Arthur's castle in the climactic battle scene. In the process, he also managed to conveniently crush the skeleton that was sneaking up on him.

Another example of both the right way and the wrong way to use a counterweight system appears in the opening fight scene of *The Four Musketeers*. Clever musketeer Aramis cuts the rope securing a heavy portcullis, and as it falls (sealing one of two gates), its weight whisks Aramis up to the top of the wall, where his opponents can't reach him. Following suit, his companion Porthos cuts the rope securing the other portcullis—but being a little slower of wit than his fellow musketeer, he cuts the rope *between* himself and the portcullis. The portcullis slams down, trapping the befuddled Porthos inside with his enemies.

Use these rules to inject some movie-style action into your game.

need is a reasonably strong projection for the hook to catch on.

To determine whether your throw actually hit the intended projection, use the rules as for attacking an object, as described in Chapter 8: Combat, in the *Player's Handbook*. A successful attack means that the grappling hook has caught on something, and it's just a matter of making a successful Climb check with an unknotted rope (DC 15). The major disadvantage to throwing a grappling hook in this fashion is that the range increment is a mere 10 feet; for longer climbs, consider employing the grapple-firing crossbow described in *Song & Silence* and repeated in the Grapple-Firing Crossbow sidebar.

Regardless of how the grappling hook is set in motion, the possible results of a failed attack roll are the same as the three possibilities noted in the description of the grapple-firing crossbow. (It's up to the DM to decide which is the case.) First, perhaps the grappling hook simply failed to catch—though it almost certainly made a noise when it fell! Second, maybe there's actually nothing there for it to catch on. In that case, not even a retry can help. Finally, the grappling hook might have caught on something, but it isn't wedged securely enough to hold your weight. A successful Use Rope check (DC 15) reveals that the grapple isn't stable, but you can free the rope by putting your full weight on it as a full-round action. Otherwise, the instability doesn't become apparent until the rope gives way after you've climbed 1d10 feet along its length.

Of course, if your goal is to climb down rather than up, you can always secure the grappling hook by hand. In this case, you need not make an attack roll to lodge it and there is no chance that it isn't stable (unless the DM has some nasty trick in mind).

Arrow, String, and Rope

An ingenious variation of the grapple-firing crossbow is a length of string, ribbon, or light cloth (such as silk) tied to an arrow. You fire the arrow so that it passes over some projection, leaving the attached string lying across the outcropping and the arrow dangling on the other side, probably at ground level.

The other end of the string is tied to a climbing rope, so all you have to do is walk over to where the arrow landed and begin reeling in the string, which pulls the rope along the same path. Once you get the rope in your hands, you can simply tie it off, or perhaps use an assistant or two to hold it in place.

Counterweights

A rope-and-pulley arrangement is a darned clever simple machine. In addition to its normal functions, it can also serve as a primitive express elevator—provided of course that there is a sufficient weight on the other end of the rope, and that the user has a strong enough grip to hang on for the trip up.

The trick itself is simple: Find a heavy object that is suspended a good distance above the ground by means of a rope and pulley. Locate the other end of the rope, which is presumably tied off to something heavier or more secure than the dangling object. Grasp that end of the rope, and then cut it. Assuming that you're lighter than whatever is at the other end, up you go.

Cutting the rope to initiate this maneuver is an attack action, and hanging on throughout the ascent requires a successful Climb check (DC 10 with two hands, DC 15 with one hand). The maximum distance you can ascend in this fashion is the distance from the heavy object to the ground, since the kinetic energy pulling the object down and you up has been expended by that point.

The rate of ascent is 60 feet per round, assuming that the counterweight is no more than 50 pounds heavier than you are. The rate increases by 10 feet per round for each additional 50 pounds of weight difference between you and the counterweight.

Like jumping or swinging on a rope, your distance you can move by hanging onto the rope is limited by your speed. The rules for attacks outlined under

SET DRESSING: LIFTS

Counterweights are all over the place, provided you know where to look. For example, a farmer might build a pulley system into a barn to haul bales of hay or other heavy objects up into the loft. Portcullises are built on the same basic principle, but a winch is added to hold the gate suspended. Even items hanging from ceilings, such as chandeliers, are often tied off somewhere within reach, just waiting for a hero to undo the knot and catapult upward. In more rural settings, a tied-off snare works on a variation of the rope-and-pulley mechanic, with the "counterweight" provided by the tensile strength of a tree or one of its sturdy branches. In dungeons, traps often use counterweights in much the same way by tying off a bone-crushing weight to some sort of trigger. If you still can't find a counterweight in your setting, you can create one quite easily with a little mechanical ingenuity. All you have to do is tie a rope to a large weight at the edge of a drop, throw the rope over a higher fulcrum, then push or pull the weight off, and up you go!

Rope-Swinging apply in this case as well (creatures take attacks of opportunity against you normally, you are considered to be climbing, you cannot rise, attack, and continue rising unless you have spring Attack, and so on). Alternatively, the DM might rule that the object falls instantly, and thus you rise instantly as well.

Have you figured out the other application of counterweights yet? The counterweight drops at the same rate as the rising object ascends. Therefore, if you set it up so that *you're* the counterweight by making sure the object tied to the other end of the rope is a little lighter than you are, you can just grab the rope up near the pulley and descend to the ground. If your total weight, including equipment, is no more than 50 pounds greater than that of the counterweight, you descend at 60 feet per round (as though you were affected by a *feather fall* spell). If your weight exceeds that of the counterweight by more than 50 pounds, you take falling damage from the drop according to the following table.

Weight Difference	Falling Damage
51-100 lb.	1 point/10 feet
101-200 lb.	1d3/10 feet
201 lb. or more	1d6/10 feet

Using These Rules

As Dungeon Master, you decide what to allow in your campaign. If you intend to use these rules in your adventures, be sure that you plan ahead. Put lots of conveniently dangling ropes in the wider areas of your encounter sites, and make sure you know where they are tied off and how long they are. Mark on your maps which pieces of scenery can be broken off and toppled over. Keep track of the elevations of all structures, trees, and other objects that might be used for these stunts.

Setting the scene like this—especially with players who are willing to use everything at hand to accomplish their goals—can slightly unbalance the difficulty of an encounter. You should be prepared to modify the experience point award for the encounter if the heroes make use of all the props you've given them in overcoming their challenges. After all, jumping across a chasm isn't anywhere near as difficult if there's a rope on which to swing as it would be otherwise. Neither is getting past the assembled enemies who are waiting for the heroes to jump across. And if there's a conveniently placed large statue to dump over on the bad guys, the heroes shouldn't get as much experience for the win as a group who did it the old-fashioned way. Of course, if you're designing the adventure yourself, you can always adjust the Encounter Level downward to account for all the help you're providing. See Chapter 7 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for information on modifying encounter levels.

Above all, use these rules to inject some movie-style action into your campaign. After all, what good is being an adventuring hero if you can't give Conan a run for his money?

The Ultimate Source
for
RPGs, CCGs, Tabletop, Board Games,
Miniatures, Dice, Paints,
Anime, Video Games and More!

All your favorites including...

and much, much more!

Get
10% off
Great games, books, & DVDs!
Offer valid until April 1, 2003
Not valid on sale/select items or game consoles
Coupon Code: 819483

Order Toll Free Today
1 (888) 499-3423
or visit us at
WWW.DOorDICE.com
http://www.doordice.com

KILLING COUSINS

githzerai hit squads

by Chris Thomasson · illustrated by Jonathan Wayshak

Few denizens of the outer planes are as mysterious as the githzerai. These willful, individually minded beings have found a way to thrive in the infinite chaos of Limbo—a place where only the most insanely unpredictable creatures can typically survive for long.

The githzerai's ability to live and flourish in an environment like this is due primarily to the dedication with which they pursue their driving passions. They live to hone their minds and bodies in the martial skills that are so necessary to their survival. They live to challenge themselves in rrakkmas—tracking and hunting illithids wherever they lurk. And they live to fight the menace of the githyanki, the other offshoot of their ancestors, the slave race that once fought for the legendary warrior Gith.

Of the githzerai's two most important foes, the illithids are perhaps more deadly, but the githyanki are more numerous. The latter might also be more dangerous overall because they are less likely to flee from potential conflict with groups of githzerai. Forming a rrakma to hunt illithids is considered a demonstration of personal toughness and resolve, but the githzerai never form parties to hunt githyanki because such tactics would result in needless loss of githzerai life. Instead, certain devoted githzerai observe githyanki plots from a distance, biding their time until they can find an opportune moment to intervene and stop a plot from taking hold.

To better combat the wily, resourceful, and powerful githyanki, the githzerai known as gith-attala, or cousin hunters, have developed new abilities and items, as well as new alliances. Gith-attala are more patient than githzerai devoted to a rrakma, and they are also far less numerous. As a result, their tactics have gradually shifted to embrace a more subtle approach. Many gith-attala take rogue or ranger levels to better facilitate their often stealthy activities.

Gith-attala frequent any planes where the githyanki have citadels or operations in progress. Thus, they are often encountered on the Material Plane, since it has long been a favorite of githyanki seeking to establish new strongholds. Gith-attala typically disguise themselves when traveling there because the sentient inhabitants of the Material Plane tend to mistake them for goblinoids, and even experienced adventurers and individuals from other worlds frequently confuse them with githyanki. Occasionally, gith-attala groups also recruit powerful creatures to take the battle to the Astral Plane, the home of the githyanki, if they feel such action is appropriate.

When pursuing a githyanki threat, a gith-attala group quickly establishes itself in the area so that its members can gather information about nearby githyanki infestations. The gith-attala make contacts with the local underworld and other information-savvy organizations, spy on nearby military activities, and take special note of adventurers in the region. The githzerai know that adventurers are likely to act more quickly and decisively to eliminate a githyanki plot than any authorities would. They also know that adventurers are often easy to manipulate, so they use this tactic whenever

possible. Nevertheless, if the stakes are especially high in a given circumstance, the githzerai eventually reveal themselves and openly offer any aid they can. The greater goal of eliminating githyanki almost always trumps any concerns they might have about maintaining secrecy.

Gith-attala have developed many resources to combat the githyanki menace, including new fighting styles and magic designed to thwart the more potent githyanki abilities. In addition, they frequently enlist the aid of gormeel slaadi in their ventures. These creatures are usually more than happy to join the gith-attala because they find planar travel exciting and always appreciate the opportunity to do battle—the nearly inevitable outcome of any gith-attala excursion. In fact, gith-attala groups were the first to use gormeels as mounts, so that they could more effectively combat githyanki dragon riders.

PLAYING A GITHZERAI

If you're interested in playing a githzerai, or in including githzerai in an existing campaign in which the *Psionics Handbook* is not in use, you can use the variant rules and advancement table given below to build a PC or NPC of a level appropriate for your group. (If you are using the *Psionics Handbook* in your campaign, adjust the entries in the table below to reflect the abilities unique to that book.) This table spreads the acquisition of the githzerai abilities over several levels. Using this progression, a githzerai character won't unbalance a party.

The character level column indicates whether a githzerai character gains a class level, "githzerai powers," or both. At each character level that provides githzerai powers, the character acquires certain githzerai abilities instead of gaining any class level. Class levels provide all the benefits normally associated with a level increase (including another Hit Die, advancement in base attack bonus and base saves, and potentially a feat or the increase of an ability score). A githzerai character with eleven class levels (or thirteen character levels) has gained all the githzerai abilities.

FEATS

The githzerai often hone their bodies as monks to combat the many threatening denizens of Limbo. But some, especially those who become gith-attala, have also developed certain abilities that enable them to more effectively counter the powers of their distant cousins, the githyanki. Some of these specialized fighting forms and abilities are detailed below, though these represent only a fraction of the feats that githzerai have developed over the millennia.

Anchoring Blow [General]

You can keep a creature from leaving the area via a *teleport* or *plane shift* effect, as per the *dimensional anchor* spell.

Prerequisite: Str 15, Wis 17, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Stunning Fist (as a feat or class feature).

Benefit: When you apply Anchoring Blow to an unarmed strike, any opponent damaged by that attack is also affected as if by a *dimensional anchor* spell (caster level equals your character level). Spell resistance applies normally. You must declare that you are using the feat

CHARACTER LEVEL	BENEFIT GAINED
1	Class level, feat, githzerai powers (+2 Dex, -2 Int, *inertial armor*, outsider traits)
2	Class level
3	Class level, feat
4	Ability score increase, class level
5	Githzerai powers (+2 Dex, +2 Wis, *psionics*)
6	Class level
7	Class level, feat
8	Class level
9	Githzerai powers (+2 Dex, *psionics*, spell resistance)
10	Ability score increase, class level
11	Class level, feat
12	Class level
13	Class level, githzerai powers (*psionics*)
14	Ability score increase, class level, feat
15	Class level
16	Class level
17	Class level, feat
18	Ability score increase, class level
19	Class level
20	Class level, feat

The character gains the following githzerai abilities as noted on the table above.

Inertial Armor (Sp): Githzerai can use psychic force to block an enemy's blows. While conscious, a githzerai has a +4 armor bonus to AC. Because *inertial armor* is composed of psychokinetic force, incorporeal creatures can't bypass it the way they do normal armor.

Psionics (Sp): A githzerai's psionic powers function as spell-like abilities (caster level 16th). These powers improve with character level as follows.

5th character level: 1/day—*daze, feather fall, shatter.*

9th character level: At will—*daze, feather fall, shatter.*

13th character level: At will—*daze, feather fall, shatter;* 1/day—*plane shift.*

Spell Resistance: Upon attaining 9th character level, a githzerai gains spell resistance equal to 5 +1 per character level.

before making the attack roll, and it can be applied to only one attack each round. Whether or not you hit, the attempt expends one daily use of the stunning fist ability.

An attack made with this feat cannot also be enhanced with any other special unarmed attack feat or class feature (such as a stunning fist or flurry of blows).

Astral Cord Whip [General]

You can use your astral cord as a weapon.

Prerequisite: Strengthen Astral Cord.

Benefit: You can use your astral cord as a whip with an enhancement bonus equal to +1 per four character levels (maximum +5). The cord functions exactly like a whip, as described in Chapter 5: Equipment in the *Player's Handbook*, except that it deals normal rather than subdual damage. You are considered proficient with the weapon when using your astral cord as a whip.

Feed the Hungry Slaad [General]

You can focus your *ki* to increase one mental ability score at the expense of another.

Prerequisites: Wis 17+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will.

Benefit: Once per day as a standard action, you can voluntarily reduce your Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma score by up to 4 points (to a minimum of 1) to increase another of those three scores by the same amount. The effect lasts for 1 minute per character level.

Ki Barrage [General]

You can focus the *ki* energy normally available for your melee attacks into ranged force attacks.

Prerequisites: Dex 16+, Wis 19+, Improved Unarmed Strike, Precise Shot, Point Blank Shot, Stunning Fist (as a feat or class feature).

Benefit: This feat lets you use your *ki* to launch a barrage of force attacks as a full-round action. When you use Ki Barrage, a glowing, white fist (or foot, or head, or whatever body part you typically make unarmed attacks with) made entirely of force appears. It functions as a thrown ranged weapon with a range increment of 30 feet. The effect lasts 1 round.

The glowing fist attacks the target or targets you designate. It uses your base attack bonus for unarmed strikes (possibly allowing it multiple attacks per round) with any modifiers that normally apply to your ranged attacks. If multiple attacks per round are permitted, you can allocate them as desired against opponents within range. For example, a 10th-level monk can make three attacks with a single use of Ki Barrage and allocate them against up to three targets. The base attack bonus is +7 for the first attack, +4 for the second, and +1 for the third.

Each successful attack deals damage as if you had hit the target with a successful unarmed strike, including all bonuses that would apply for such a blow. You must declare that you are using the feat before making any attack

rolls. Whether or not any of the attacks hit, the attempt expends one daily use of the stunning fist ability.

Attacks made with this feat cannot be also be enhanced by any other unarmed attack feat or class feature (such as stunning fist or flurry of blows), or by the Two-Weapon Fighting feat, or by any feats or special abilities that affect ranged attacks (such as Rapid Shot).

Planar Tracker [General]

You can track a creature through the magical signature it leaves behind after using a *teleport* or *plane shift* effect.

Prerequisites: Alertness, Track, Wilderness Lore 15 ranks.

Benefit: Using the Track feat, you can follow tracks even if your quarry has used a *teleport* or *plane shift* effect to escape. When the you reach the location at which the magical method of escape was employed, you can attempt a Wilderness Lore check (DC 30). Success means you are aware that a *teleport* or *plane shift* effect has been used. If your check result beats the DC by 10 or more, you know which effect was used. If your check result beats the DC by 15 or more, you know the direction in which your quarry has moved (in the case of teleportation) or the destination plane (in the case of *plane shift*). In any case, if you locate the creature's tracks within 1 hour per character level, you can instantly identify them as your quarry's and attempt another Wilderness Lore check (DCs as given in the Wilderness Lore skill description in the *Player's Handbook*) to determine how fresh they are.

Strengthen Astral Cord [General]

You strengthen your astral cord, making it more difficult to sever.

Benefit: Your astral cord gains a +4 deflection bonus to AC. In addition, its hardness increases to 15, and its hit points increase to 40.

Normal: A creature projecting into the Astral Plane has a silver cord with your AC, hardness 10, and 20 hit points that connects its physical and astral forms. Damage to this cord can force the astral form back to the physical body. Severing the silver cord kills the character's physical body.

Limbo Strike [General]

You can channel the unique environment of Limbo into your weapon, exposing spellcasters who take damage from its blows to wild magic.

Prerequisites: Int 13+, Wis 13+, Expertise, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (selected weapon), Knowledge (the planes) 4 ranks, must have established control within a raw area of Limbo.

> They live to fight the menace of the githyanki, another offshoot of the slave race that fought for gith.

Benefit: When you take this feat, you must select one weapon which you have chosen for your Weapon Focus feat; this feat work only in conjunction with attacks made with that weapon. You can use Limbo Strike once per day for every four character levels you possess.

You can apply this feat to any single attack you make with the designated weapon, but you must declare that you are using Limbo Strike before making the attack roll. Any opponent damaged by that attack must make a successful caster level check (DC 10 + one-half your character level + your Wisdom bonus) if it tries to cast a spell or use a spell-like ability within 1 round per character level you possess. If the check is successful, there is no effect. Otherwise, the target is exposed to the effects of wild magic. (See Table 1-1: Wild Magic Effects in the *Manual of the Planes* to determine the effect of the spell or ability. If you are not using the *Manual of the Planes*, use the *rod of wonder* effects from the *Dungeon Master's Guide* instead.) This wild magic effect applies only to the target's first attempt to cast a spell or use a spell-like ability during the duration of the effect; subsequent attempts function normally. If the target makes no such attempt before the duration expires, there is no effect.

Special: This feat can be taken multiple times. Each time you take it, it applies to a different weapon.

GITHZERAI ITEMS

The githzerai—particularly the gith-attala—have designed a number of magic items that provide them with advantages over the githyanki. Plane-traveling githzerai sometimes share these items with other foes of the githyanki that have proven to be especially competent allies.

New Weapon Quality

The githzerai have developed one new weapon quality, as given below.

Suppressing: A creature damaged by a suppressing weapon must make a Will saving throw (DC 22) or lose the benefits of its spell resistance for 1 round. The target's spell resistance returns to normal on the following round.

Caster Level: 15th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *antimagic field;* **Market Price:** +5 bonus.

New Specific Weapon

Githzerai monks have developed special quarterstaffs that utilize the suppressing quality (see above).

Quarterstaff of Law: This *+2 lawful suppressing quarterstaff* is designed specifically for use by the most powerful githzerai monks against the race's two archenemies, the slaadi of limbo, and foes who attempt to invade their homes. While wielding the weapon, the user of a *quarterstaff of law* can produce an effect identical to that of the *order's wrath* spell (caster level 7th) once per day and use *detect chaos,* as the spell, at will (caster level 1st).

Caster Level: 18th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *antimagic field, detect chaos, order's wrath,* creator must be lawful; **Market Price:** 278,300 gp; **Cost to Create:** 139,150 gp + 11,132 XP.

New Wondrous Items

The wondrous items developed by the githzerai are primarily designed to foil the special abilities of their cousin-race, the githyanki.

Amulet of Astral Projection: This silvery, prismatic pendant hangs from a fine chain of adamantine. When the command word is spoken, the amulet projects its wearer and up to eight

other willing creatures of the wearer's choice onto the Astral Plane as if with an *astral projection* spell. Using this item takes its toll, however. Upon returning from a trip to the Astral Plane that was made with the amulet, the user must make a successful Will save (DC 23) or suffer 2d6 points of Intelligence damage. (Creatures that accompanied the wearer on the trip are safe from this effect.) *Amulets of astral projection* are quite rare, but githzerai find them indispensable during sabotage and scouting missions.

Caster Level: 17th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *astral projection;* **Market Price:** 320,320 gp; **Cost to Create:** 210,160 gp + 8,813 XP.

Extradimensional Anchor: This device constantly radiates a *dimensional anchor* effect in a 40-foot radius emanation. Creatures on the same plane within this area cannot use *astral projection, blink, dimension door, ethereal jaunt, etherealness, gate, maze, plane shift, shadow walk, teleport* and similar magic. This property makes the item extremely valuable for fighting highly mobile opponents such as githyanki.

Appearing as a glowing, green crystalline prism, an *extradimensional anchor* is roughly 2 feet long and 8 inches in diameter. It levitates 2 feet off the ground at all times and floats along within 2 feet of its owner, much like an animated shield. The anchor cannot, however, support any weight; any effect that exerts more than 1 pound of force on the anchor causes it to fall to the ground. The anchor continuously sheds light equivalent to that of a torch.

By making a successful melee touch attack against the owner, an opponent can take possession of an *extradimensional anchor.* Such an action provokes an attack of opportunity.

Each *extradimensional anchor* comes with a shield—a fine, magically enhanced mesh of mithral that, when draped over the anchor, suppresses the *dimensional anchor* effect. This shielding does not, however, stop the item from floating.

Caster Level: 7th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *dimensional anchor;* **Market Price:** 112,000 gp; **Cost to Create:** 56,000 gp + 4,480 XP.

Bottled Limbo Items

These uniquely crafted wondrous items can be created only in the Ever-Changing Chaos of Limbo. Made from the wild substance of which Limbo itself is formed, such items vary wildly. Those described below are but a few examples of such equipment.

Vials of Element-Dominant Limbo: A vial of element-dominant Limbo is a single-use item that causes the area it affects to mimic the traits of one of the four elemental planes. Each vial has a range increment of 10 feet. Some are designed primarily for use as grenade-like weapons; others are made to be detonated at the feet of their bearers (see descriptions below). An air- or water-dominant vial can affect only one creature; an earth- or fire-dominant vial affects all creatures within one 5-foot square.

Air-Dominant Vial: This bottle is designed to be detonated at the feet of its bearer, although it can also be thrown at a target. (In the latter case, the vial is treated as a grenadelike weapon, and the wielder must make a successful ranged touch attack to hit.) When the vial bursts, it grants one creature (either the bearer or a target hit by the thrown vial, depending on how it was used) the benefit of subjective directional gravity—that is, the creature can decide in which direction gravity pulls it and change that direction at will. (See page 9 in the *Manual of the Planes* for a full description of this effect. If you don't use the *Manual of the Planes,* treat this effect as though the target were the subject of a *fly* spell.) The affected creature also doesn't need to breathe and is immune to the effects of air-based spells or abilities (such as an air elemental's whirlwind power or a *control winds* spell). All of these effects last for 10 minutes.

Caster Level: 13th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *freedom of movement, reverse gravity;* **Market Price:** 5,600 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,800 gp + 224 XP.

Earth-Dominant Vial: This potent vial, designed for use as a grenadelike weapon, brings the suffocating power of earth to bear on a single target. Any creature hit by such a vial must make a successful Reflex save (DC 18) or be encased in a 5-foot cube of solid earth. Success indicates that the target is pushed into a 5-foot square adjacent to the cube (target's choice) rather than being encased, but the victim still takes 4d6 points of damage in the process. A Large creature or a creature with a

facing larger than 5-feet by 5-feet automatically succeeds at the save. A Medium-size or smaller creature encased in such a cube is helpless (although it has 100% concealment), takes 6d6 points of damage, and has no air to breathe; thus it begins to suffocate unless it has a means of avoiding that result. (See Suffocation in Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details.) Creatures that do not need to breathe still take damage from the effect. The earthen cube has hardness 5 and 60 hit points. Destroying it frees the creature trapped within.

Caster Level: 13th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph other, wall of stone;* **Market Price:** 5,026 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,513 gp + 202 XP.

Fire-Dominant Vial: Like the *earth-dominant vial,* this item is also designed for use as a thrown weapon. Predictably, it explodes in a great gout of flame on impact. The target must make a successful Reflex save (DC 18) or be covered with a viscous flaming substance known as liquid fire. This goo deals 6d6 points of fire damage on impact and continues to burn for 3 rounds thereafter, dealing 1d6 points of fire damage per round. In addition, the liquid fire ignites any flammable materials the target is carrying, and any metal carried or worn by the target is affected as though by a *heat metal* spell. (This latter effect lasts for the normal 7-round duration of that spell, even though the target stops taking damage from the liquid after 3 rounds.) On a successful saving throw, the target takes half damage from the fire and all other effects of the *fire-dominant vial* are negated.

Although it is akin to alchemist's fire, liquid fire is magical and cannot be scraped off or otherwise neutralized. *Dispel magic,* however, works normally on it.

Caster Level: 13th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *fireball, heat metal;* **Market Price:** 1,225 gp; **Cost to Create:** 613 gp + 49 XP.

Water-Dominant Vial: Like the *air-dominant vial,* this item is intended to benefit the bearer. It can either be detonated at the bearer's feet or thrown at a target. (In the latter case, the vial is treated as a grenadelike weapon, and the wielder must make a successful ranged touch attack to hit.) When the vial bursts, it grants one creature (either the bearer or a target hit by the thrown vial, depending on how it was used) the benefits of a *water breathing* spell, a *freedom of movement* spell, and an *air walk* spell. The target also gains a swim speed equal to its normal speed. Finally, at any time during the duration of these effects (maximum 10 minutes; see below), the subject can vomit forth a 5-foot-wide line of water 30 feet long that deals 5d8 points of damage (Reflex DC 18 half) to every creature in its area. The use of this breath weapon instantly ends all of the vial's effects. Otherwise, the benefits last for 10 minutes.

Caster Level: 13th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *air walk, freedom of movement, water breathing;* **Market Price:** 4,012 gp; **Cost to Create:** 2,006 gp + 160 XP.

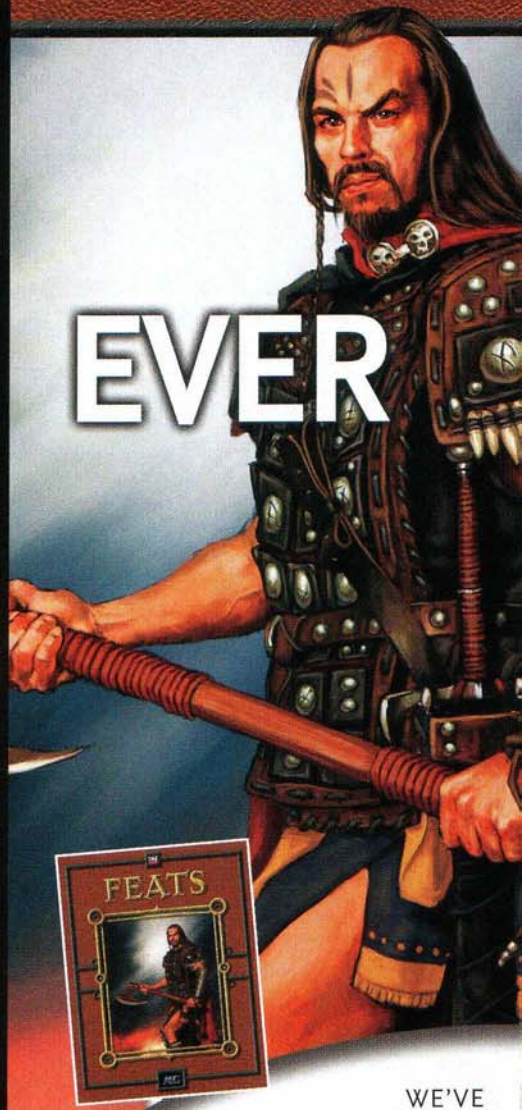
CREATURES

A few githzerai realized long ago that certain natives of Limbo might prove to be useful allies. Although many of the lawful githzerai scoffed at the notion that they might need aid, others found merit in the idea. One early scouting party encountered the gormeel slaadi, and a long-term alliance was born. Many githzerai communities now house at least a handful of their slaadi partners.

Gormeel

Large Outsider (Lawful)
Hit Dice: 13d8+78 (136 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)
AC: 26 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +15 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 24
Attacks: Bite +20 melee, 2 claws +17 melee
Damage: Bite 2d8+7, claw 1d6+3
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks: Breath weapon, spell-like abilities, trample
Special Qualities: Alternate form, DR 15/+1, elemental affinity, fast healing 4, outsider traits, scent
Saves: Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +11
Abilities: Str 25, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 17
Skills: Balance +13, Bluff +19, Concentration +22, Disguise +13, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +21, Search +17, Spot +21
Feats: Alertness, Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

THE BEST BOOK OF FEATS EVER



WE'VE TAKEN HUNDREDS OF FEATS from dozens of books and compiled them into one location. Adding over 200 NEW FEATS and correcting existing ones, this giant compendium is everything you'll ever need on the topic. From background, general, spellcasting, to even infernal feats, this book covers it all and brings your d20 System™ campaign to life. Arrives in stores this March.

Requires the use of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Player's Handbook, THIRD EDITION, published by Wizards of the Coast.®
Illus. Raven Mimura © 2003 AEG.

AEG

ROLL	DOMINANT ELEMENT	EFFECT OF BREATH WEAPON
1	Air	8d6 points of electricity damage
2	Earth	6d8 points of acid damage
3	Fire	5d10 points of fire damage
4	Water	10d4 points of cold damage

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground (Limbo)
Organization: Solitary, pair, gang (3-5), or pack (6-10)
Challenge Rating: 10
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always lawful neutral
Advancement: 14-26 HD (Large); 22-39 HD (Huge)

A fluke breed of slaadi born from the spawning stone, the gormeel are mutants that slipped beneath the notice of Ssendam and Ygorl, the slaad lords of Limbo. Naturally lawful, they take particular pleasure in battling their slaadi cousins, reveling in the destruction of these chaotic natives of Limbo. For their part, other slaadi are equally fond of destroying any gormeel that they can find. Gormeel exemplify one of the strangest aspects of true chaos: In a completely random environment, even lawful behavior is a possiblity.

In its natural form, a gormeel resembles a massive, four-legged reptile, with skin varying in color from gray-green to purple. Although its forelegs resemble the knuckled, curled-under hands of an ape, the creature walks exclusively on all fours. The head of a gormeel resembles that of a massive lizard, including bony ridges over the eyes and rows of razor-sharp teeth. A gormeel has no wings, so it must rely on its natural buoyancy to stay aloft while flying.

Gormeel usually exhibit the serious demeanor of their githzerai allies, but occasionally their chaotic heritage seeps through. Some gormeel have even been known to play occasional practical jokes. Gormeel often serve the githzerai as mounts in combat, carrying their allies into battle bareback or in small, howdahlike baskets strapped to their backs.

Combat

The gormeel is an intelligent combatant that can fight equally well on land or in the air. It always tries to use its breath weapon and spell-like abilities to best effect before closing to melee. In close combat, it rears back on its bowed hind legs and uncurls its front toes to reveal long, crescent-shaped talons, with which it lashes out at foes between snaps of its wicked jaws.

Gormeels often alter their tactics to accommodate the wishes of their githzerai allies or because the situation demands a different strategy. They frequently use their alternate form abilities to appear as githzerai, revealing their true, terrifying forms only after battle has been joined.

Trample (Ex): As a standard action during its turn each round, a gormeel can trample opponents at least one size category smaller than itself. This attack deals 1d8+10 points of bludgeoning damage. A trampled opponent can attempt either an attack of opportunity at a -4 penalty or a Reflex save (DC 23) for half damage.

Alternate Form (Su): A gormeel can shift between its natural form and that of a githzerai at will, and it can remain in githzerai form indefinitely. This ability is otherwise similar to a *polymorph self* spell (caster level 9th). In its githzerai form, the creature can use weapons and other equipment meant for humanoids. This ability allows gormeels in the company of gith-attala to travel incognito. Thus, many who have encountered githzerai have also met gormeels without being aware of that fact. Gormeel also use this ability to hide from the slaadi that hunt them.

> NATURALLY LAWFUL, THE GORMEEL TAKE PARTICULAR PLEASURE IN BATTLING THEIR SLAADI COUSINS.

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds, a gormeel can spew forth a 30-foot cone of raw Limbo material. Any creature caught within its area is subject to some of the effects of uncontrolled Limbo. Roll 1d4 and consult the table below to determine which element is dominant at the time.

Any creature caught within the breath weapon's area takes the damage that corresponds to the dominant element on the table above (Reflex DC 22 half). In addition, a spellcaster who fails his saving throw must make a successful caster level check (DC 15 + spell level) for each spell cast within 1 round of exposure. If the check fails, consult Table 1-1: Wild Magic Effects in the *Manual of the Planes* for the results of the spell. (If you're not using the *Manual of the Planes*, use the *rod of wonder* effects from Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* instead.) A successful save negates this wild magic effect.

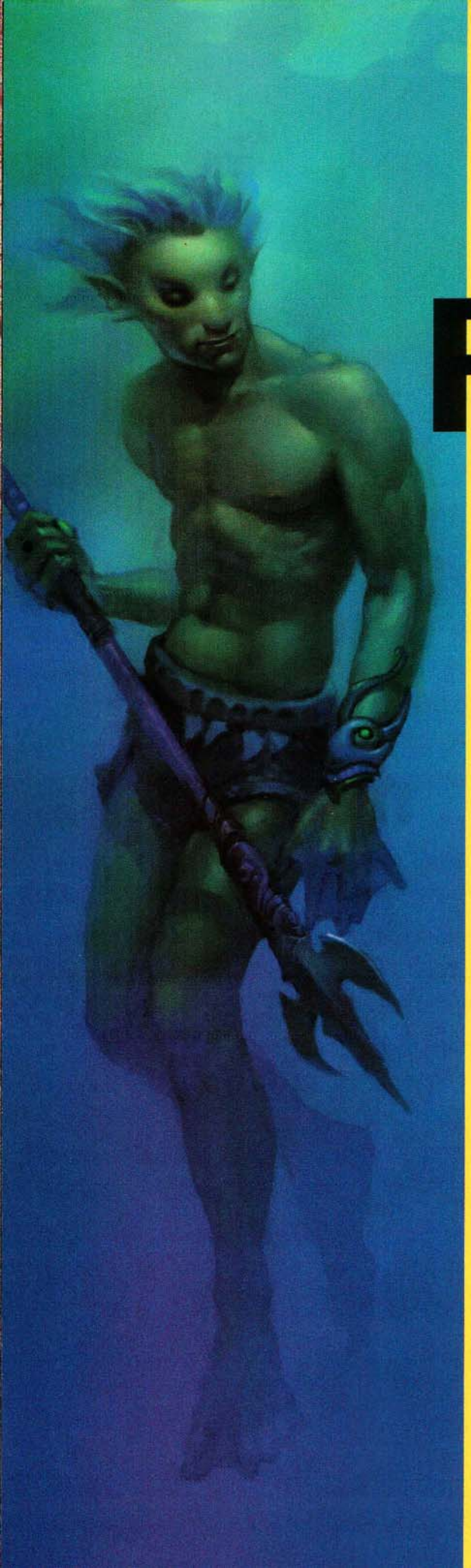
Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*detect chaos, detect magic, dispel chaos, protection from chaos, see invisibility;* 3/day—*confusion, dimension door, order's wrath;* 1/day—*freedom of movement, mislead, word of law.* Caster level 14th; save DC 13 + spell level.

Elemental Affinity (Ex): The gormeel is especially adept at surviving in all elements and enduring all forms of energy damage. Each round, as a free action, it can alter its elemental affinity to adapt to its current environment, choosing any one of the following immunities: air (immune to all air spells and effects, as well as electricity), earth (immune to all earth spells and effects, as well as acid), fire (immune to all fire spells and effects), or water (immune to all water spells and effects, as well as cold). The gormeel can make this change only once per round, and only on its turn.

Fast Healing (Ex): A gormeel regains lost hit points at the rate of 4 per round. Fast healing does not restore hit points lost from starvation, thirst, or suffocation, and it does not allow the gormeel to regrow or reattach lost body parts.

Outsider Traits: A gormeel has darkvision (60-foot range). It cannot be raised or resurrected.

Scent (Ex): A gormeel can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.



RACIAL VARIANTS

TEMPLATES FOR PC RACES

by Wil Upchurch · illustrated by Todd Harris

The doughty dwarf, the wandering halfling, the wise and aged elf—these fantasy archetypes are all reflected in the standard player character races of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game. What if these were not the only versions of those races? Suppose those ironworking dwarves under the mountain have cousins living in the frozen wastes. These distant relatives might never have seen a forge, much less worked steel into the shape of a weapon or helm. Or consider a race of half-elves who, through the ingenuity granted by their human blood, learned long ago to tap into the innate magical abilities of their elven ancestors. Now magic permeates their souls and influences all they do.

The following racial variants can be used to create new subraces based on any of the standard races in the *Player's Handbook*. Not only does each variant provide new abilities suited to the area in which the subrace lives, it also describes a distinct culture common to all subraces using that variant.

RACIAL VARIANTS

Applying a racial variant to one of the standard *Player's Handbook* races is a relatively simple process, much like applying a template from the *Monster Manual* to a monster. The most significant changes often occur in the cultural portion of the variant's description. Where standard half-orcs might be brutish and short-tempered, for example, a magic-blooded half-orc might find the world a curious place

worthy of long and patient inquiry. Such a character might get surly only if someone interrupted his musings.

Each racial variant modifies the race to which it is applied (hereafter called the ancestral race) in minor ways. Most of these adjustments apply equally to any ancestral race, although a few affect certain races differently than others.

Racial traits of the ancestral race are retained unless the variant specifies otherwise. These traits include racial skill bonuses, bonus feats, special visual capabilities (such as darkvision), ability modifiers, combat bonuses against specific foes, and racial weapon proficiencies. Thus, a human retains his extra skill points and extra feat at 1st level, a dwarf retains his stonecunning, and an elf retains her ability to spot secret doors unless the variant description indicates otherwise.

Aquatic (Water-Dweller)

Sometimes, through either natural or magical means, a race acquires the ability to live underwater. Aquatic races often spring up next to land-based civilizations in coastal areas, although some exist only in the depths of the ocean. Members of aquatic races tend to view their land-born cousins with interest and respect, although the former do everything they can to retain their own unique cultures. Occasionally, aquatic races team up with their land-based counterparts for joint ventures, such as harbor patrols, expeditions against pirates, and protection from undersea threats.

Cultural Aspects

The following cultural attributes are common to most aquatic races.

Personality: An aquatic race shares the temperament and interests of its ancestral race, but its members are more serene than their land-born cousins.

Physical Description: A water-dweller is taller and thinner than a member of her ancestral race. Her feet and hands are webbed to facilitate swimming. (Aquatic elves even have fins along their limbs that serve the same purpose.) A water-dweller's skin can be any shade from pale green to dark blue. Her hair usually matches her skin color but could be one or two shades darker.

Water-dwellers wear very little clothing, and what they do wear tends to cling tightly to their bodies. Some favor jewelry made of coral and other undersea treasures.

Relations: The attitudes of water-dwellers tend to be very similar to those of their land-born cousins. Members of aquatic races generally treat land-born creatures with guarded pleasantness on the rare occasions that they meet.

Alignment: Having avoided most of the political, economic, and military turmoil of the surface world, water-dwellers tend to view life in a more placid manner than their land-born cousins. Members of an aquatic race favor neutrality in at least one aspect of alignment, if not both.

Lands: The civilizations of water-dwellers often mirror those of their ancestral races, although the former favor loosely organized governments and more open societies. Water-dwellers generally have plenty of space available for building, so they are less likely to structure their habitats as densely populated cities than their land-based cousins. Instead, undersea races prefer to maintain loosely defined territories in which families and individuals can carve their own niches.

Religion: Water-dwellers usually pay homage to at least one deity related to oceans, storms, or nature. Otherwise, they worship the same gods that members of their ancestral races do.

Adventurers: While there are plenty of adventures to be found beneath the waves, water-dwellers must occasionally venture onto land to fulfill some important goal. Some are lured by the alien ways of the surface people; others feel a wanderlust that can be tamed only by walking the earth. Such adventurous water-dwellers often acquire *talismans of adaptation* to facilitate their travels on land.

Racial Traits

Water-dwellers have the following traits.

Speed: A water-dweller moves at half the speed of her ancestral race on land, and she gains a Swim speed equal to double the ancestral race's land speed. (Thus, an aquatic dwarf has a land speed of 10 feet and a swim speed of 40 feet.)

Breathing: A member of an aquatic race can breathe water but cannot breathe air without the aid of magic.

Vision: A water-dweller loses all the ancestral race's special visual capabilities. She gains low-light vision that allows her to see twice as far as a human in conditions of dim light.

Skills: A water-dweller gains a +2 racial bonus on Spot checks and suffers a -2 racial penalty on Listen checks. A water-dweller also gains a +8 racial bonus to Swim checks due to having a swim speed.

Waterborn: A member of an aquatic race suffers a -1 circumstance penalty on attack rolls, saves, and checks when not at least partially submerged in water.

Automatic Language: Aquan. A water-dweller retains the automatic languages of her ancestral race and also gains Aquan.

Level Adjustment: +0.

NEW MAGIC ITEM: Talisman of Adaptation

This talisman alters the physiology of a water-dweller so that she can survive on land for long periods of time. While wearing this multicolored coral pendant, a water-dweller can breathe air and suffers no penalties for being out of the water (see Fish out of Water, below). Each such talisman functions for one week after it is first activated, after which it loses all magical properties and becomes a normal piece of jewelry.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *water breathing*; **Market Price:** 650 gp; **Cost to Create:** 325 gp + 26 XP; **Weight:** —.

Arctic (Ice-Dweller)

The frigid lands near the poles of the world are home to many unusual creatures, including several humanoid races. These ice-dwellers make their homes in and around massive glaciers, navigate ice-choked waters in flat, sturdy boats, and thrive despite living in one of the harshest environments imaginable. It should come as no surprise that the primary focus of ice-dwellers is survival, and they tend to have a harsher outlook on life than those who live in temperate climates.

Cultural Aspects

The following cultural attributes are common to most arctic races.

Personality: Nearly all ice-dwellers are more grim and humorless than members of their ancestral races. Efficiency in word and deed is crucial to survival in the harsh arctic realms, so ice-dwellers are straight to the point in conversation, and they have little patience for those who speak in riddles or half-truths. Because they must struggle for even the most basic existence in the severe climate of arctic regions, excess of any kind is often offensive to them. They are

FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

Adding a race of wild halflings or aquatic elves to your campaign world can spice it up a bit without changing its nature too much. The PCs might never actually encounter any of these strange folk, but they can hear tales of their existence that add a sense of wonder to the campaign.

On the other hand, many variant races can interact with PCs in interesting ways. Deep-dwellers make good villains, especially in games with darker themes. Aquatic and magic-blooded races offer strange and wondrous cultures for the PCs to explore, which can constitute either the end or the beginning of an adventure. Imagine, for instance, that the PCs have been seeking an ancient artifact. Their search eventually leads them beneath the waves where they uncover a civilization of aquatic gnomes. Or perhaps a magic-blooded dwarf makes contact with the characters and asks them stop a force of humanoids that are threatening to overrun his people's peaceful valley. Those villainous humanoids, in turn, could be arctic half-orcs, driven from their northern homes by roaming bands of ferocious wild halflings.

Adding racial variants to your campaign not only gives players access to characters with distinctive abilities, but it can also create a more fantastic environment for adventuring. Try making a few racial variants yourself and see.

frugal and value hard work for the benefit of all over individual accomplishment.

Physical Description: An ice-dweller is heartier than a member of his ancestral race, and he tends to carry extra weight on his frame even when in exceptional physical condition. His skin can be any shade from pale white to light blue, and his hair and eyes can be of any color found in members of his ancestral race.

Ice-dwellers wear many layers of basic clothing as protection against the intense cold of their homelands. They do not particularly value jewelry or other ornamentation, and they carry only what they need to survive.

Relations: Those who spend their lives in the bleak and comfortless arctic regions treat outsiders with guarded wariness, if not outright distrust. Although members of most arctic tribes are willing to welcome strangers in from the cold, they tend to watch such newcomers very closely and hurry them on their way as soon as possible. Of course, a stranger with a particularly useful skill might be invited to stay—it is difficult to turn away a strong back or a skilled toolmaker in the desolate and frigid lands where the arctic races make their homes. In addition to their own distrust of outsiders, members of arctic races tend to harbor many of the same prejudices that their ancestral races do.

Alignment: Arctic races follow the alignment preferences of their ancestral races.

Lands: It is difficult for any living thing to survive in the frozen wastelands where ice-dwellers live. Thus, most other races know little or nothing of their arctic cousins, and what they do know is often tainted by legend and hearsay. Most ice-dwellers make their homes in caves or beneath the ground, although some tribes have adapted to life on the surface by building ice houses and other structures that can survive the fierce winter storms.

Religion: The gods of ice, winter, and storms often rank as highly in the pantheons of arctic races as do the deities of their ancestral races.

Adventurers: Ice-dwellers must exert themselves merely to survive in the bitter climate of their homelands, so they tend to make ideal adventurers. Those who dislike the constant struggle of life in the arctic often travel far from their homes in search of comfort, if not adventure. Occasionally, arctic tribes also send emissaries to gather aid against a particularly strong enemy or to secure emergency stores during hard times.

Racial Traits

Ice-dwellers have the following traits.

Ability Adjustments: An ice-dweller retains all his ancestral race's ability adjustments. In addition, he gains +2 Con and -2 Cha.

Save Adjustments: A member of an arctic race gains a +1 racial bonus on saving throws against cold effects and a -1 racial penalty on saving throws against fire effects. These adjustments apply to cold and fire effects from any source, whether magical or mundane.

Skills: Ice-dwellers gain a +2 racial bonus on all Wilderness Lore checks because they are taught to survive in the wild from a young age.

Spell-Like Abilities: An ice-dweller whose ancestral race had spell-like abilities retains those and also gains the ability to use *ray of frost* once per day as a 1st-level caster.

Level Adjustment: +0.

Deep (Deep-Dwellers)

Deep-dwellers are the evil denizens of dark, uncivilized caverns. They come forth to prey upon races that dwell much closer to the surface. Deep races are rarely seen above ground, and this is considered a blessing by those who understand that the reality of these beings transcends even the horrific tales told of them to misbehaving children.

Cultural Aspects

The following cultural attributes are common to most deep races.

Personality: Deep-dwellers are despicable beings who delight in the pain and suffering of others. They go to great lengths to cause such distress, and a few sages have theorized that they even draw strength from it. Members of the deep races keep to the shadows, where they can remain hidden until they are ready to strike. They tend to be cowardly when faced with danger, and they usually try to avoid physical assaults and direct confrontations.

Physical Description: A deep-dweller is smaller and weaker than a member of her ancestral race, but she makes up for that lack in sly cunning and innate abilities. Her skin is deep black and glistens with an oily sheen, and her monochromatic eyes can be either white or pale gray. What little hair she has may be black, white, or any shade of gray.

The typical deep-dweller wears only a rough loincloth. Chieftains and other important figures, however, sometimes wear coiled silver armbands to symbolize their rank.

Relations: Deep-dwellers do not get along with anyone. Often their members target other deep races with their acts of cruelty.

Alignment: Members of the deep races lean very heavily toward chaos and evil, although neutral and even good individuals can be found on rare occasions. Such individuals usually end up fleeing their communities to avoid the cruel punishment they would surely face were their "soft" natures ever discovered. Neutral deep elves can sometimes find new homes within

drow cities, although they never rise above the level of servants and are more often treated as slaves.

Lands: The deep races share space with cloakers and drow in caverns so far beneath the surface that even underground dwellers such as dwarves and svirfneblin are unaware of them. Although they spend much of their time terrorizing near-surface communities (such as those of dwarves and gnomes), deep-dwellers guard their territories fiercely, attacking strangers without warning or provocation.

Religion: Members of the deep races have scant knowledge of the religions practiced by surface dwellers. Most deep-dwellers worship either obscure gods of their own or the deities of other Underdark races, such as Lolth or Ghaunadaur.

Adventurers: Few deep-dwellers have the impetus to leave their homes and become adventurers, although the rare nonevil ones might attempt to find worthy allies upon reaching new communities. Often such an individual actively works against her old community, patrolling its hunting grounds and even striking at the very homes of its members.

Racial Traits

Deep-dwellers have the following traits.

Ability Adjustments: A deep-dweller retains all her ancestral race's ability adjustments. In addition, she gains +2 Intelligence and -2 Strength.

Vision: A deep-dweller loses all her ancestral race's special visual capabilities but gains darkvision (120-foot range).

Skills: A deep-dweller gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks in underground areas because she has learned how to move around without being seen or heard.

Spell-Like Abilities: A deep-dweller retains any spell-like abilities her ancestral race had and also gains the ability to use *expeditious retreat, ghost sound,* and *spider climb* each once per day (caster level equals deep-dweller's character level).

Light Sensitivity: A deep-dweller suffers a -1 circumstance penalty on attack rolls, saves, and checks made in areas of bright light.

Automatic Language: Undercommon. A deep-dweller loses the automatic languages of her ancestral race and gains Undercommon, the language shared by all deep races. Bonus Languages: Dwarven, Gnome, Goblin, Orc, Terran, Common.

Level Adjustment: +1.

Desert (Desert-Dweller)

Hiding in caves from the hot desert sun and springing ambushes from behind sand dunes, the desert-dwelling races are among the most adaptable and hearty humanoids known. Most desert-dwellers make their livings as scavengers and traders, constantly moving from one area to another in search of the next big score.

Cultural Aspects

The following cultural attributes are common to most desert races.

Personality: Members of the desert races are usually quite friendly, although during the day they might seem brusque because they are in a hurry to get on about their business and out of the oppressive heat. At night, however, they offer warm greetings and good drink to any travelers who happen upon their camps. To them, a stranger is neither friend nor foe—just good company whose presence brings a moment of joy.

Physical Description: A desert-dweller is usually heartier in build than a member of his ancestral race. Bronze skin and dark hair are typical, since such adaptations tend to make life in the scorching desert more comfortable.

The clothing favored by desert-dwellers tends to be loose and light, and they wear just enough to keep the heat off during the day and the chill off at night. Most desert-dwellers wear headgear that not only protects them from the sun but also provides warmth during the cold desert nights.

Relations: Desert-dwellers are not choosy about trading partners, but many share the prejudices and attitudes of their ancestral races.

Of all the desert races, desert dwarves are the most inclined to keep to themselves. This attitude is primarily a result of their tendency to build self-sufficient communities rather than take up the nomadic lifestyle favored by so many desert-dwellers.

Desert gnomes are a particularly social lot who tend to stay in one area until they have worn out their welcome with the natives, then cheerfully move on. Members of some other desert races, particularly the elves, view desert gnomes as parasitic and despise them even more than monsters that roam the dunes.

Alignment: The predominant alignment among desert-dwellers is neutral. It takes equal parts of law and chaos to survive under the harsh desert sun. Evil folk soon find themselves without friends, and to be

isolated in an environment that cannot long support individuals means certain death. In contrast, those who value the principles of good over survival often find themselves lacking the means to survive.

Lands: Except for desert dwarves, most desert-dwellers are nomads who wander from one settlement to the next in search of vital supplies. Thus, they have no true lands of their own. Desert dwarves, however, are protective of their settlements and private oases, and they are willing to defend them to the death if need be.

Religion: Desert-dwellers tend to have the same religious preferences as their ancestral races, but the worship of any sun, light, or fire deities that exist in the pantheon is emphasized.

Adventurers: There is plenty of opportunity for adventure on the burning sands. Denizens of the desert may turn to adventuring because they find the scavenger's life too difficult, or simply because they crave the rewards of the adventuring life. Although scavenging societies might seem to be extended families, those who leave them to pursue their own goals rarely return.

Racial Traits

Desert-dwellers have the following traits.

Save Adjustments: A member of a desert race gains a +1 racial bonus on saving throws against fire effects and a -1 racial penalty on saving throws against cold effects. These adjustments apply to cold and fire effects from any source, whether magical or mundane.

Skills: A desert-dweller gains a +2 racial bonus on Intuit Direction and Wilderness Lore checks because he is accustomed to making his way in the wilderness. A desert-dweller can use Intuit Direction untrained.

Spell-Like Abilities: A desert-dweller whose ancestral race had spell-like abilities retains those and also gains the ability to cast *create water* once per day (caster level equals desert-dweller's character level).

Favored Class: Ranger. A desert-dweller loses the favored class of her ancestral race and always favors ranger instead.

Level Adjustment: +0.

Magic-Blooded (Spark)

During a large-scale battle, eldritch energy might suffuse a whole community, giving rise to an entirely new race. Occasionally the taint of fey blood grows especially strong in a forest people over time. These are but two of many possible origins for a magic-blooded race of beings.

Magic-blooded creatures, often called sparks, have an innate sense for the arcane energy that flows around them. They feel it as other races feel the wind. Magic can even be a source of life for such gifted races, and they treat it with reverence and awe.

Cultural Aspects

The following cultural attributes are common to most magic-blooded races.

Personality: Except for the constant awe with which sparks regard the world around them, they behave much like members of their ancestral races. This wondering attitude can be disconcerting at first, and it leads other beings to regard sparks as a bit distracted and capricious. In truth, however, sparks vary in attitude and outlook as much as the members of any other race do.

Physical Description: A spark looks very much like a member of her ancestral race does, although she might exhibit one or more unique physical characteristics. Perhaps she has multicolored eyes or hair, or maybe tiny motes of light appear to trail behind her whenever she moves quickly or speaks in animated tones. Regardless of how her magical nature manifests itself, a spark sees her differences as a blessing and is not embarrassed by them in the least.

Relations: Sparks divide the world into magical and nonmagical beings rather than along racial lines. They treat members of other races that have a strong affinity for magic (such as elves and gnomes) as respected equals. All others are welcome in their midst as long as they mean no harm.

Alignment: Members of a magic-blooded race tend toward chaos over law. Good sparks are often protectors of nature and good-humored pranksters—a fact that leads some sages to believe that they share blood with fey creatures. These beings enjoy watching and manipulating the magical energies they feel, and they can often be a source of great insight into magical lore. Neutral sparks are somewhat reclusive; most just want to be left alone to explore the world that surrounds them. The rare evil sparks are spiteful and cruel beings who spend their days trying to hoard magic or power.

Lands: Members of magic-blooded races tend to make their homes in out-of-the-way locales. One group might choose a spot deep within a primordial forest, while another might settle in a mist-covered vale deep within a mountain range. Sparks are not averse to dealing with outsiders, but they are wary of the mundane ambitions exhibited by other races. Living apart gives sparks the freedom they need to explore and develop the magical abilities they receive at birth.

Sparks tend to live at peace with nature, and their homes reflect this harmony. Members of such races often live in treetop villages or in mud-covered huts beneath the roots of ancient oaks. Sparks who settle in humanoid lands often find cities a bit confining and stuffy, so they settle on the outskirts of a city or town. Most such individuals eventually become soothsayers or wise folk for the local communities.

Religion: Members of magic-blooded races concern themselves more with arcane power and how it interacts with the natural world than they do with piety or faith. That said, the typical spark pays at least minimal tribute to a god of magic. If her ancestral race has such a deity, she chooses that one; otherwise she has no qualms about worshiping the magic god of another race.

Adventurers: A spark's natural curiosity about arcane matters often leads her to wander in search of new knowledge and lore. Members of magic-blooded races have no special ties to any particular home, although they sometimes band together to separate themselves from the outside world, as noted above. Sparks are driven to adventure not so much by the love of money as by a burning desire to learn how to tap into their latent abilities more efficiently. A spark is quite likely to give up her share of a party's treasure in return for greater access to the magic acquired by her companions.

Racial Traits

Sparks have the following racial traits.

Ability Adjustments: A spark retains her ancestral race's ability adjustments. In addition, she gains +2 Charisma and -2 Wisdom.

Vision: A spark loses her ancestral race's special visual capabilities and gains low-light vision that allows her to see twice as far as a human in low-light conditions.

Skills: A spark gains a +2 racial bonus on Knowledge (arcana) and Spellcraft

checks because she spends her life devoted to magic. A spark can use Knowledge (arcana) and Spellcraft untrained.

Spell-Like Abilities: A spark retains any spell-like abilities that her ancestral race has and also gains the ability to use *detect magic, Nystul's magical aura, Nystul's undetectable aura,* and *read magic* each once per day (caster level equals spark's character level).

Favored Class: Sorcerer. A spark loses the favored class of her ancestral race and always favors sorcerer instead.

Level Adjustment: +0.

Wild (Wilderness-Dweller)

Lost in the jungles, forests, and mountains of the world, wild races are primitive versions of common races. Wilderness-dwellers are not as sophisticated as members of their ancestral races, lacking the precision craftsmanship of the dwarves and the natural magical ability of the elves, but they make up for these deficiencies with heightened survival skills, keen senses, and animalistic instincts.

Cultural Aspects

The following cultural attributes are common to most wild races.

Personality: Wilderness-dwellers tend to be very territorial, and they guard their families and clans closely. They are not quick to trust strangers, but they form strong bonds with outsiders who do manage to earn their trust. Wild dwarves are especially temperamental about intruders on their land, although they do not attack as readily as wild half-orcs or wild halflings, who are surprisingly ferocious.

Physical Description: A wilderness-dweller looks very much like a member of her ancestral race, except for the pronounced bone structure of her face. Wild elves have even more angular faces than their more civilized counterparts, while wild dwarves have large, pronounced foreheads and very thick jaws.

Relations: Members of the wild races are very territorial, so they interact with other creatures only when absolutely necessary. They often maintain good trading relations with other wild races, but they rarely trade with civilized cultures except through intermediaries such as local druids or rangers.

Alignment: Wilderness-dwellers are most often chaotic, though some tend toward neutrality because of their more structured societies (by primitive standards, at least). Most are good-hearted, tending to view the world in terms of what is best for the tribe. Very few wilderness-dwellers are evil.

Lands: Wilderness-dwellers live in untamed lands—on broad plains, deep within treacherous mountains, or in uncharted jungles or forests. They avoid heavily populated areas.

Religion: Members of the wild races tend to be more superstitious than religious. Most rely on religious leaders (some of whom are actually adepts of great power) to give them spiritual guidance. Individuals might pray to aspects of animal and nature gods, but only rarely does one of them achieve true communion with such a deity.

Adventurers: Wilderness-dwellers might set out into the world for a variety of reasons. They might need to seek the help of a group of friendly, yet civilized, folk to avert a prophesied disaster, or they might be asked by tribal elders to retrieve an artifact that will be of use in a coming conflict from an ancient burial site. Often such a quest is only the beginning of a wilderness-dweller's adventuring career. She might be lured away from her people by the wonder of civilized society, or she might form a bond with outsiders not welcome in her tribal lands.

Racial Traits

Wild races have the following traits.

Ability Adjustments: A wilderness-dweller retains all her ancestral race's ability adjustments. In addition, she gains +2 Str, -2 Int, and -2 Cha.

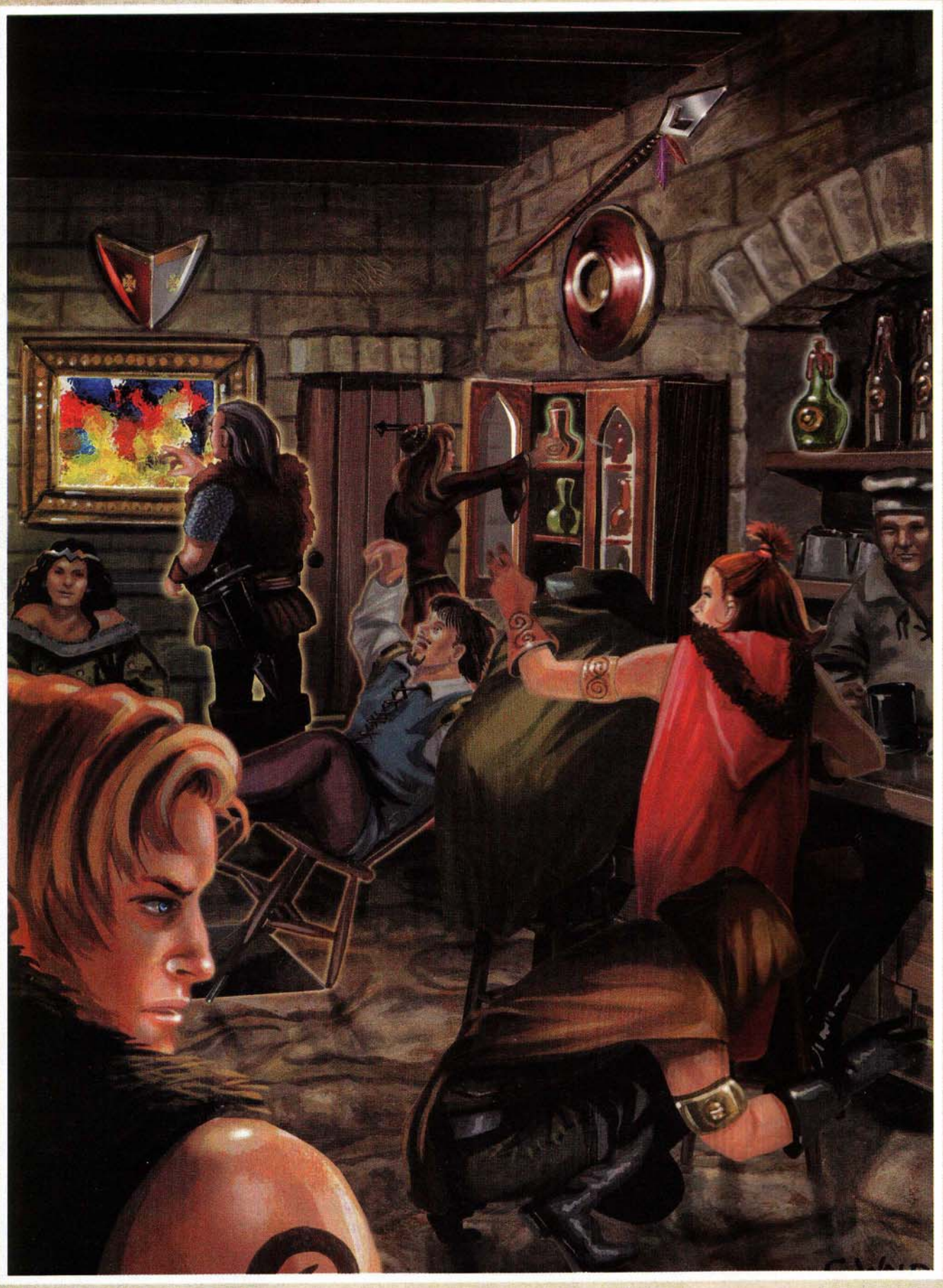
Speed: A wilderness-dweller adds 5 feet to her base speed.

Skills: A wilderness-dweller loses any racial skill modifiers her ancestral race had (including the extra skill points a human gains at 1st level). She gains 1 extra skill point at each level because she must constantly train herself to stay one step ahead of the dangers that surround her. In addition, she gains a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks and a +4 racial bonus on Wilderness Lore checks. Poorly suited to social interaction, a wilderness-dweller suffers a -2 racial penalty to Bluff, Diplomacy, and Sense Motive.

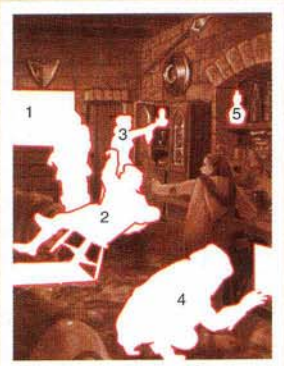
Spell-Like Abilities: A wilderness-dweller loses any spell-like abilities her ancestral race might have had.

Favored Class: Ranger. A wilderness-dweller loses the favored class of her ancestral race and always favors ranger instead.

Level Adjustment: +0.



1 ILLUSIONARY STOCK 2 TRAPPED CHAIR 3 ILLUSIONARY STOCK 4 HOLD PERSON/MESSAGE TRAP 5 POISONED BOTTLE



URBAN TRAPS

25 DEVIOUS DEVICES

by Penny Williams · illustrated by Christina Wald

With a heavy gait that belied his natural wariness, the trapmaker returned to his rooms behind the wainwright's shop. Checking behind him for shadowing watchers, he bypassed the three traps on his own door out of habit and let himself in. He placed a sheaf of parchments on the table and then sank into his chair with a sigh.

It had been a busy afternoon. A new thieves' guild had begun a rash of thefts that threatened to leave nobles and merchants alike impoverished. The old guild had sold protection to some and had at least been smart enough to leave its other victims with the wherewithal to survive until the next theft. But this outfit was different; its unknown leader seemed to have a more aggressive agenda in mind. As usual, the townsfolk—those already robbed and those merely fearful—had all begun coming to the old trapmaker for aid in protecting their valuables. This additional work over and above the brisk business he usually did in custom traps for discerning clients threatened to overwhelm his resources. "I'm going to have to get my hirelings to work overtime," he mused.

Laying these concerns aside, he picked up one of the parchments and began to review his notes from the week's interviews. "I have to keep telling these folks that urban traps are different than dungeon traps," he murmured to himself. "They shouldn't be designed to kill in most cases. People can blunder into them—friends, family, or even the owner, but everybody wants lethal when they think of a trap."

"The tavernkeeper," he mused, recalling his interview with the owner of the Black Dragon Inn, "wants a new trap for his till. No poison there, of course; he and his family have to open that strongbox about fifty times a day. Maybe just a screamer would do the job . . . no, he's got that now. Says it upsets the patrons when it goes off. Maybe it should be one that goes off only when someone who intends to steal touches the till. I'll make it a hold effect that also calls the owner. It'll probably get the youngest son a couple times; I think that kid takes money from the till to spend on his girl. But it's time the young folks learned responsibility, I say."

Hold Person/Message **Trap:** CR 5; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; multiple traps (one *hold person* trap and one *message* trap that notifies the innkeeper and his family when the trap has been sprung); spell effect (*hold person*, 10th-level wizard, Will save [DC 14] negates, duration 10 rounds), spell effect (*message*, 10th-level wizard, up to ten recipients); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28). **Cost:** 2,100 gp, 168 XP.

Note: This trap is really one CR 4 trap that produces a *hold person* effect and one CR 2 *message* trap that whispers, "Someone is attempting to rob the till," to the innkeeper and his family, or as many of them as are within the spell's range (2,000 feet) at the time. These effects are independent of each other and must be detected and disarmed separately.

"Then he wants one for his wine cellar. He carries some rare wines, that's for sure. So, should it be on the door of the little room where he keeps the rare stuff, or on the merchandise itself? Maybe both, but he's not that rich, so individual bottle traps had best be cheap and sparingly used.

Again, family members go down there a lot, so it can't be lethal, and it shouldn't even be injurious, but it could be . . . frightful. If I rig a fear trap with a clairvoyance trigger to let only the innkeeper and his wife into that room, that should be enough to get rid of the casual thief."

Fear Trap: CR 5; magic device; visual trigger (clairvoyance); no reset; spell effect (fear, 7th-level wizard, Will save [DC 16] negates); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29). **Cost:** 2,150 gp, 172 XP.

"If he wants extra protection on certain bottles, I could always coat them with a paralytic poison. He'll have to remember to wear gloves when he goes down for them. Carrion crawler brain juice isn't going to affect really experienced thieves, though, and with a more effective trap already on the door, it might be a waste of money for him to use this kind of extra protection."

Wine Bottle with Contact Poison: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); no reset; poison (carrion crawler brain juice, Fortitude save [DC 13] resists, paralysis/0); Search (DC 20), Disable Device (DC 18). **Market Price:** 400 gp.

"Finally, he wants a trap room upstairs that he can give to anyone who has a history of sneaking out without paying the bill—one that won't let the occupants leave without his intervention. I could do a forcecage, but he'd never be able to afford it. Maybe just a 'stuck' door would do. I have a lovely little model that druid worked with me to create once. 'Course, it's not as useful for windows, so it's best used on an interior room without any windows. I'd better give him a magic key that dispels the effect as well, so he can let the poor wretch out." The trapmaster made a note to contact the druid the following week.

Stuck Door Trap: CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (*detect thoughts*); no reset; multiple traps (one *ironwood* trap and one *wood shape* trap); spell effect (*ironwood*, 11th-level druid, duration 10 days), spell effect (*wood shape*, 11th-level druid); Search (DC 31); Disable Device (DC 31). **Cost:** 5,000 gp, 400 XP.

Note: This trap is really one CR 7 trap that turns the door and frame to ironwood and one CR 2 *wood shape* trap that fuses the door to the frame, making it impossible to open in the usual way. The resulting door is 3 inches thick and has hardness 10, 90 hit points, and Break DC 34. The spell effects are independent of each other and must be detected and disarmed separately.

"Then there's the Drunken Mermaid Tavern down by the waterfront. The owner of that one wants a dropping shutter to seal off the bar and till in the event of a brawl, which happens four or five times a night, as I understand it. That's easy enough—an iron plate with a cutout for the bar. It can fit into a recess in the ceiling and drop down to mask off the area behind the bar with the flick of a switch. More of a safety device for the personnel and stock than a trap, really—although it could easily knock out someone standing in the wrong place."

Dropping Shutter Trap: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Reflex save (DC 15) avoids; dropping shutter (2d6, shutter); multiple targets (all within a 5-foot-by-10-foot area in front of the bar and a 5-foot-square area to either side of the bar); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 25). **Market Price:** 7,500 gp.

"The other new addition the owner wants is a little less savory: a few places along the wall where the chairs tip back to deposit the occupants inside secret compartments where gas will put them to sleep. She says it's a precaution to weed out troublemakers, but it's more likely that she's selling unconscious 'recruits' to outgoing ships."

Tipping Chair Trap: CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; entrapment; Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 28). **Market Price:** 8,600 gp.

Gas Trap: CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; gas; never-miss; onset delay (1 round); poison (slumber mist*, Fortitude save [DC 18] resists, sleep 1 hour/sleep 6 hours); Search (DC 18); Disable Device (DC 18). **Market Price:** 9,600 gp.

*Slumber mist is an odorless, colorless inhaled toxin (Fort DC 18). It is derived from a particular kind of fungus native to forested areas. The initial damage is sleep for 1 hour, and the secondary damage is sleep for 6 hours. Slumber mist costs 200 gp per dose.

"Next is the goldsmith. He needs a new set of locks for his doors. That's easy; a rusting grasp trap in a lock would be a fine choice for him. All I have to do is build a little claw inside that grabs whatever is inserted into it, and the intruders' lockpicks are so much worthless dust. Since the spell doesn't affect nonferrous metals, all he needs to do is make a copy of the key in gold."

***Rusting Grasp* Trap:** CR 5; magic device; touch trigger (attached); no reset; spell effect (*rusting grasp*, 7th-level druid, Atk +15 melee touch); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29). **Cost:** 1,450 gp, 116 XP.

"He also wants a new system for his display cases. I need to convince him that he doesn't need to have the jewelry and such sitting out in display cases. All he needs for sales purposes is an illusion of the items. Then he can generate customer interest without endangering his stock. 'Course, he won't be able to put anything new in the case without having the spell renewed. But it won't cost that much if the trap doesn't need a reset feature."

Display Case with Illusionary Stock: CR —; magic device; location trigger; no reset; spell effect (*permanent image*, 11th-level wizard, Will save [DC 19] disbelief); Search (DC 31); Disable Device (DC 31). **Cost:** 3,400 gp, 264 XP.

"The vault is where he'll actually need protection," continued the trapmaster to himself. "For the vault, maybe a shifting room would be best. I'll set it up as two consecutive sets of doors that lead to a double vault, with a common stone wall but no connecting door. Anyone who opens the outer vault door without activating the hidden lock bypass causes the room beyond to shift, so that the inner door opens into a fake vault filled with junk. Once they're inside, the two vaults shift back to their former positions, leaving the door by which the thieves entered opening onto a solid stone wall. If I put an antimagic field in there, they won't be able to teleport out again. I'll have to put in a warning light to let the goldsmith know

Urban traps are different than dungeon traps—they shouldn't be DESIGNED TO KILL IN MOST CASES.

he's caught one. If he leaves them in there more than a few hours, they're likely to asphyxiate." After making a small drawing, the trapmaster turned to the next sheet of parchment.

Double-Vault Trap: CR 5; magic device; location trigger; manual reset; hidden lock bypass (Open lock [DC 25], Search [DC 25]); shifting room (no damage; Reflex save [DC 26] to jump out before room shifts back); multiple targets (all in 20-foot-by-20-foot vault); Search (DC 30); Disable Device (DC 28). **Market Price:** 33,500 gp.

"Let's see now. The town guards want a new trap system for the jail, to keep the new guild from breaking its members out too easily. The members of that guild seem to use a lot of magical enhancement, so the first thing to do is fit out the cell block entrance and any windows to the outside, with a dispel effect. The trigger should be visual—probably *true seeing*, so it can catch invisible intruders—and it should be set so it won't trigger the trap for anyone wearing a guard's uniform."

Door Dispeller Trap: CR 7; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); no reset; spell effect (*Otiluke's dispelling screen*, 7th-level wizard, duration 7 rounds); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29). **Cost:** 72,000 gp, 3,760 XP.

"I can also do some shutter traps on the cells of the more important criminals. Whenever someone touches the lock on the cell door without flicking the hidden switch, an iron shutter slams down over the cell door, blocking access to the lock, door, and person inside. It can even deal a bit of damage to anyone silly enough to touch it, if the miscreant isn't quick enough. Not great for the guards, but it'll teach them to be careful."

Shutter Trap: CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; hidden switch bypass (Search [DC 35]); Reflex save (DC 25) avoids; (2d6 plus pin, falling shutter, grapple bonus +25 to maintain pin), Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 31). **Market Price:** 96,000 gp.

"Hmmm . . . a new hallway trap for the guard captain's house. Bet he figures himself as a target for retribution from the new guild. He says he wants his daughter protected from kidnapping, but that girl is a real firecracker, so he probably wants her protected from herself too. He specifically asked for something that would prevent anyone from getting into her room and prevent her from getting out without aid. Sounds like a good place for that seesaw trap.

"He's got a 60-foot stretch of corridor there leading to her room, and a nanny that lives in the suite with her. I'll put in a hidden switch to let the old woman get past. If that switch isn't tripped, the floor will act like a seesaw with the pivot at the 30-foot mark. The only way to get across safely is to have two roughly equal weights, within about 20 pounds of each other, placed the same distance from the pivot. If they move, they both have to move at once and at the same speed to maintain the balance. If the weights are ever unequal on the two sides, such as if one weight moves faster than the other, or there is no counterbalancing weight at all, the whole floor of the corridor pivots down in the direction of the heaviest weight or the more distant individual of a pair, dumping that creature or object into the pit below. The person on the other half then has a chance to be smashed into the ceiling."

Seesaw Hallway Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; hidden switch bypass (Search [DC 25]); Reflex save (DC 25) avoids; 40 ft. deep (4d6, fall and 4d6, smash against the ceiling for anyone on the upswinging end); multiple targets (all in 60-foot-by-10-foot hallway); pit bottom (holding cell; see below); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 20). **Market Price:** 11,600 gp.

"He wants the intruder dumped into a cell in the basement and tormented by an image of his late wife. That says to me that it's likely to be the daughter who's caught in the trap most often. I think the damage from the fall is a minor inconvenience compared to the lecture to come!"

***Programmed Image* Trap:** CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (*clairvoyance*); no reset; spell effect (*programmed image*, 11th-level wizard); multiple targets (all in 10-foot-by-10-foot holding cell); Search (DC 31); Disable Device (DC 31). **Cost:** 4,050 gp, 324 XP.

Note: When triggered, this trap produces an image of the captain's late wife, who begins to deliver a lecture in a screeching tone for 11 rounds. If the captain's daughter is in the cell, the image berates her for being an evil child and bringing shame upon her mother's head. She ends by ordering her daughter to stay in her room for a month. If it is a stranger to the house, the image shouts for the captain and lectures the miscreant about his evil ways. She ends the tirade by predicting that the captain will arrest the intruder and have him hanged.

The trapmaster turned over another sheet of parchment and considered the next job. "The Temple of Pelor wants a trap on the crypt below the building that will prevent undead from getting in. Evidently they have reason to believe that a cult of vampires and other undead creatures is trying to raid the tombs of the faithful for more 'converts' to unlife. I think a nice forbiddance will do for the doorway to the area, with sunburst on each crypt."

***Forbiddance* Trap:** CR 7; spell; spell trigger;

OTILUKE'S DISPELLING SCREEN

Abjuration
Level: Sor/Wiz 4
Components: V, S, M
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)
Effect: Wall whose area is up to one 10-ft. square/level or a sphere or hemisphere with a radius of up to 1 ft./level
Duration: 1 minute/level (D)
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

You create an opaque, immobile, shimmering screen of violet energy. Any creature or unattended object passing through the screen is affected by a targeted dispel magic cast at your caster level (see the *Player's Handbook*).

You make a dispel check against the spell or against each ongoing spell currently in effect on the object or creature. A dispel check is 1d20+1 per caster level (maximum +10) against a DC of 11 + the spell's caster level. The screen has no effect on any items a creature carries.

If an unattended magic item passes through the screen, you make a dispel check against the item's caster level. If you succeed, all the items magical properties are suppressed for 1d4 rounds.

Spell effects that are not operating on objects or creatures cannot pass through the screen. A *disintegrate* or successful *dispel magic* spell removes *Otiluke's dispelling screen*, while an *antimagic field* suppresses it.

Material Component: A sheet of fine lead crystal

automatic reset; spell effect (*forbiddance*, 11th-level cleric, password-protected, Will save [DC 19], see spell description for details); Search (DC 31); Disable Device (DC 31). **Cost:** 5,660 to hire a spellcaster.

With hardly a thought, the old man THREW FOUR DAGGERS, pinning the intruder's clothing to the floor.

***Sunburst* Trap:** CR 9; magic device; proximity trigger (*detect undead*); automatic reset; spell effect (*sunburst*, 15th-level cleric, blindness plus 3d6 or 15d6 to undead plus destruction of undead specifically so affected by sunlight, Reflex save [DC 22] for half damage and negation of blindness); multiple targets (all in 150-foot-radius burst; Search (DC 33); Disable Device (DC 33). **Cost:** 6,050 gp, 484 XP.

"Then there's Sir Edward, who wants a trapped carriage to use as bait to kill the thieves who stole his prize phaeton. It's a two-horse carriage with four wheels. I can rig it so the wheel spokes will collapse after a few seconds at high speed. The wainwright's a friend of mine; he'll know how to do it. Then I just need a spell to spook the horses. He said to make the trigger spring the trap after the carriage has been out of the barn for 4 hours. About the length of his mother's shopping trips. I wonder. . . ."

Ghost Sound Trap: CR 2; magic device; timed trigger; no reset; spell effect (*ghost sound*, 5th-level wizard); Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 26). **Cost:** 125 gp, 10 XP.

Runaway Carriage Trap: CR 7; mechanical; timed trigger; no reset; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; (10d6, carriage wreck); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 22). **Market Price:** 41,300 gp.

"Then there's Sir Trent, that young nobleman without visible means of support. He wants a trap for his guest room door and windows. Most likely he's having a clandestine relationship with some rich lady. The window traps are easy—they're second-story, so they're not likely to be set off by servants or family members, at least if they only go off when accessed from the outside. Blindness would do the job just fine there, and I'll set them up with a proximity trigger that triggers the trap when anyone comes within 5 feet of the window from the outside. He can give a trusted servant the password so she can wash the windows now and then."

Blindness Window Trap: CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*blindness/deafness*, 3rd-level wizard, blindness version, Fortitude [DC 13] negates); Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 27). **Cost:** 3,500 gp, 240 XP.

"The door trap is another question," he continued. "There are plenty of servants in that place, and it wouldn't do to blind one just for forgetting a password. Also, he'd probably appreciate having his servants able to bring up meals and such." The trapmaker laid his parchment in his lap and gazed at the ceiling thoughtfully. "Hmm . . . I've heard my friend Agava talking about a spell that wipes out the subject's memory of what he's just seen. I'll get her to cast the spell. If Trent accidentally sets it off himself, so much the better—it'll be amusing when he doesn't remember the lady being there." He chortled softly as he made another note.

***Modify Memory* Trap:** CR 5; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*, limited to anyone inside or within 5 feet of the doorway when it's open); automatic reset; spell effect (*modify memory*, subject is unable to remember what she saw within the room, 10th-level bard, Will save [DC 16] negates); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29). **Cost:** 58,500 gp, 1,640 XP.

The trapmaker laid his papers in his lap with a thoughtful expression. "Maybe I'm in the wrong business; I could make a lot of money in blackmail just by presenting my suspicions to the right folks."

Just then, the ceiling gave way with a loud crash as a body dropped to the floor. With hardly a thought, the old man threw four daggers to pin the intruder's clothing to the floor. "Planning to relieve me of a few trap plans?" he said with a grin. "That roof is rigged with a panel that shatters on contact. The sloping area around it is greased, so most can't help but fall."

***Grease* and *Shatter* Trap:** CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*grease*, 10th-level wizard, duration 10 rounds, Reflex save [DC 10] negates); spell effect (*shatter*, 3rd-level wizard); multiple targets (all within a 30-foot radius of the 5-foot-square section of roof affected by *shatter*); Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 27). **Cost:** 9,000 gp, 720 XP.

Breakaway Ceiling Trap: CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Reflex save (DC 27) avoids; 30 ft. deep (3d6, fall); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 26). **Market Price:** 22,500 gp.

In the foyer, a cry of pain sounded. "That'll be an ally of yours, caught by my friend who guards the front door," said the trapmaster. "And we should be hearing from more of your compatriots momentarily."

***Bigby's Grasping Hand* Trap:** CR 8; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); automatic reset; spell effect (*Bigby's grasping hand*, 15th-level wizard; Atk +32 melee, grapple bonus +37); Search (DC 32); Disable Device (DC 32). **Cost:** 110,500 gp, 6,840 XP.

Just then, a loud meow sounded from the kitchen. "That would be Tasha the cat, getting a nice meal of polymorphed thief. She enjoys that trap: It turns intruders into rats." The thief pinned to the floor turned at least two shades paler.

***Polymorph Other* Trap:** CR 7; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); automatic reset; spell effect (*polymorph other*, 7th-level wizard; Fortitude save [DC 16] resists, turns subject into a rat); Search (DC 29); Disable Device (DC 29). **Cost:** 72,000 gp, 2,760 XP.

"I'd guess from the way the sound of footsteps overhead stopped that someone just fell victim to my hypnotic pattern trap," the trapmaster said with a broad smile. "Don't you worry, the guards will be here momentarily to fetch you. I have alarms set to ring a bell at the guardhouse."

Hypnotic Pattern Trap: CR 3; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*hypnotic pattern*, Will save [DC 13] negates, duration 10 rounds); Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 27). Cost: 3,500 gp, 280 XP.

After the guards had removed the hapless intruders, the old trapmaster poured himself a glass of wine and settled back into his chair. "No, blackmail is not for me. I'm not as light on my feet as I used to be, and blackmailers make a lot of enemies. I'll just stick with what I do best.

REVISION 3.5 UPDATE

by Ed Stark

As always, the theme of this article is the upcoming D&D 3.5 revision. This month, however, there's a secondary theme: time travel. No, not time travel in *Dungeons & Dragons*, but time travel through the history of a rules mechanic in the game.

January 31st, 2003, Ed Stark's Office

The three core books are still in various stages of editing and development, and the Wizards of the Coast RPG R&D office is buzzing with excitement: The revisions are nearly ready to go up to typesetting. Text will be flowed, art will be placed, and soon we'll have color print outs ready for a final proofing pass. Soon, it will all be a matter of anticipation: Have we interpreted your feedback correctly? Did we make the right changes? Will anyone ever get to work a normal eight-hour, five-day work week again?

Then, Bill Slavicsek, Director of RPG R&D and my boss comes into my office. "You need to solve this damage reduction issue . . . now."

Ever on top of things, I look confidently up at Bill and say, "What damage reduction issue?"

It seems that over the last twelve hours or so a heated debate has sprung up between the designers. I've been so focused on a variety of other issues that I completely missed it. After a few conversations and a quick scan of my email, I find the problem. Contacting all the principles, I set up a meeting. Two hours later the issue is resolved: DR is now settled.

August 9th, 2000, GenCon Convention Hall

The new edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* is released at GenCon. We've got cool "3E" t-shirts, we're running demos and the Dungeon Delve until everyone is exhausted but happy, and the fans don't seem overly dismayed that it'll be another month until the *Dungeon Master's Guide* hits the shelves (look, there's a pre-release copy in that plexiglass case!), and it'll be October before the *Monster Manual* comes out. Fans pour through the *Player's Handbook*, finding all the new things we've worked for more than two years to put in there, looking for their favorite spell to see if it made it into the game.

The seminars are packed. Everyone has questions. I sit in on most of the seminars, watching, moderating, and occasionally answering questions myself. Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams—members of the original design team along with Peter Adkison and Rich Baker—lead most of the discussions.

"What's DR?" A young man asks. He's opened the *Player's Handbook* to the barbarian's class description. Our panelists field the question, referring the young man to the rules in the *Player's Handbook* and talk about how DR will also be an important feature of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and *Monster Manual*. Jonathan, Skip, and Monte explain where DR came from and how this new concept has its origins in the original workings of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Summer 1979, Ed Starks' Parents' House

"I hit him with my sword?"
"What plus?"
"+2."
"The sword bounces off."
"Aww, man . . ."

Back in 1st Edition AD&D some monsters were completely or partially invulnerable to certain types of weapons—particularly nonmagic weapons. One of our designers calls the concept "you have to be this tall to fight this monster," and it's a pretty apt analogy. If you didn't have a +1 or better weapon there was no way your fighter could hurt a Type IV demon, and a +2 or better weapon was necessary if you were going to even scratch Demogorgon.

This made a lot of sense in some ways, mythologically speaking. Most of the monsters in early D&D games were based on old myths and legends. Lycanthropes, hydras, and other magical beasts simply couldn't be taken down by normal means—the heroes always had to have something special. Fortunately for the storytellers, they always did . . . eventually.

In a game sense, however, this "on/off" toggle proved to be unsatisfying and somewhat disappointing. Unless you plumbed some pretty obscure *Dragon* articles or delved deep into "unofficial" rules, you could drop a planet on Demogorgon and unless it was a +2 or better weapon it'd be like hitting a two-headed German shepherd with a sponge. Worse, actually; not many German shepherds have tentacles that can cause your limbs to shrivel up and fall off.

INNOVATION!

I think I mentioned how the game designers at Wizards of the Coast worked for more than two years on the "3.0" version of *Dungeons & Dragons*. Well, not surprisingly, this issue came up. The long and short of it—the designers wanted creatures to be resistant to damage but not invulnerable. They came up with damage reduction, using a lot of earlier elements of the game and some serious playtesting and number crunching.

There's no denying that the "XX/+Y" version of DR works better than the old "+Y or better weapon to hit" system. But over the last three years we've noticed some cracks in the foundation, and we know many of you have, too. There are really only a few major issues:

The "XX" number (the damage resistance number) is often too high. The grick, for example, is CR 3 and has DR 15/+1. We don't expect a lot of 3rd-level fighters to be packing *+1 longswords* and if they aren't, there's almost no way they can do more than 15 points of damage in a single hit. Heaven help the 1st- or 2nd-level fighter who runs into a grick. The grick only has an average of 9 hit points, but unless the spellcaster has some good damage-dealing spells or someone gets lucky, this CR 3 encounter could take out an entire 3rd-level party.

The "+Y" number (the indicator) is often too easily attainable. If a spellcaster preps *magic weapon,* thegrick dies in two rounds, if not sooner. Not a very satisfying encounter there either.

The whole system lacks mythological flavor. It isn't about seeking out or even determining the right substance; it's all about having the *magic weapon* or, later on, *greater magic weapon* spell handy.

The solution we came up with addresses all three of these issues. First, we've knocked a lot of the damage resistance numbers down to more meaningful numbers. When you

see the 3.5 version of the *Monster Manual,* you'll see that the mean for the damage resistance number has become 10, but there are still plenty of 5's and 15's out there. At the time of this writing, the iron golem sits at 15, along with a strong collection of other monsters.

Extensive playtesting and feedback from you told us that 10 is a number that's intimidating but not entirely unworkable. At very low levels a fighter can certainly deal more than 10 points of damage with a longsword—he has to get lucky, but most of the low CR creatures don't have DR 10 anyway—and at higher levels Tordek the dwarf averages approximately 24 points of damage per strike, and he's hardly a min/maxed character. He won't be happy about giving up 10 points per shot, but he can deal with it.

As to the second issue, this became the thorniest problem (and the one of the now-famous January 30th conference). How can we make the indicator something worthwhile?

The simple +1, +2, +3 progression doesn't work very well. The spell *greater magic weapon* has been reworked to give more modest bonuses (at the time of this article the spell yields a +1 for every four levels of the caster instead of every three levels), but that doesn't mean a character can't go out and purchase a fairly inexpensive (compared to the cost of actual magic weapons) *wand of greater magic weapon* with a caster level of 20. That would bypass any existing DR in the game and each charge would work for 20 hours!

No, the bonus system wouldn't work. Back to the time machine.

October 28th, 1750
A Village in Hungary

Horrible murders occur every night. Rumors of a man-beast terrify the populace. A strange and frightening man appears, a man wearing wolfskins and bearing a crossbow. He carries silver-tipped arrows, a quiver full of which could buy everything in this meager village twice over. No one even thinks of taking one. The man goes out into the night, alone. Horrible howls erupt in the darkness, and the peasants cling to each other in fear. The howls stop and the man departs and mysteriously as he came. The killings are over.

Back to Our Roots

The werewolf hunter, Hercules' use of fire on the hydra's neck-stumps, and similar myths gave us the original idea; and we looked to them for a solution to the current problem.

Our designers went through the *Monster Manual* and determined that we needed to spread the DR indicators around a little bit if we were going to make things interesting and keep the game balance intact. One of our designers, James Wyatt (who worked extensively on the *Fiend Folio*) made up a spreadsheet with all the DR monsters on it, all their resistance and indicator numbers, and certain notes about each creatures nature. Over the course of several weeks, we hammered out a DR system that combined the flavor of old myths with the game balance of *Dungeons & Dragons.* We think you'll like it.

As with all the systems in D&D, this one spans all three books and the 3.5 Revision addresses each in its own way. We liked, for example, the quantification the bonus types introduced in 3.0 gave us. These bonus types tell us so much—what bonuses stack, where the bonus comes from, if the bonus can be dispelled or suppressed—a system like that for damage reduction would work, too.

So we came up with some DR indicator types, and it took us a while. At the time of this writing, magic is still one of the primary indicators. We took away the "how tall" entry and made it simply "magic." If a creature or character has DR 10/magic, you subtract 10 points from each hit unless you're hitting it with a magic weapon of any plus. Here's a list of indicator types:

Magic (magic weapons)

Epic (weapons with a +6 or greater indicator; you won't see many of these in the Core game)

Alignment (good, evil, lawful, chaotic—weapons can have alignments, or be aligned magically, as can creatures)

Special material (silver, adamantine, cold iron—weapons can be constructed of these materials, but each has its own rules and costs)

Nothing (that "—" indicator still means nothing bypasses the creature's DR. Just do a lot of damage or use spells!)

This isn't meant to be a comprehensive list. In fact, we look to you to come up with suggestions for other types of DR. As with bonus types, we'll want to keep the list manageable, but I doubt the game will be out a week before someone—perhaps a fan, one of our designers, or a clever d20 company—comes up with one or more interesting new indicators.

The Player's Handbook

So now it's time for some specific previews. In the 3.5 version of the *Player's Handbook,* you'll see DR addressed in many ways. Barbarians still get DR at various levels, but now (based on your feedback), they get it a little bit earlier and the numbers go up a little faster.

MONK LEVEL	KI STRIKE ABILITY
4	Magic: The monk's unarmed attacks are treated as magic for purposes of bypassing DR.
10	Lawful: The monk's unarmed attacks are treated as lawful for purposes of bypassing DR.
16	Adamantine: The monk's unarmed attacks are treated as adamantine for purposes of bypassing DR and ignoring hardness.

Monks address damage reduction as well. They still get DR at 20th-level, but the most dramatic change is that their *ki* strike ability no longer follows along after everyone else in the party has what they need to bypass a particular "+" in DR. At the time of this writing, the monk's *ki* strike ability looks like this:

We had to tackle spell issues as well. The *greater magic weapon* spell is still good for bypassing DR XX/magic, but is that enough? Well, we've made some tweaks to the spell to make it more useful, but the important thing is it still gives your weapon bonuses that ramp up as you increase in level. Now that you don't have to worry about having a particular plus to bypass the bad guys' DR, you can invest in special material weapons and special enhancements to your weapon (like holy, flaming, or keen).

It also wouldn't be fair to include nebulous properties of DR indicators like "lawful" and "good" without giving you the means of temporarily meeting those requirements, so there's some magic to help you out, magic like the *align weapon*

spell. We deliberately avoid giving out spells that make a weapon "work like" silver, adamantine, or cold iron, however—special materials are special materials. Besides, you've got the *polymorph any object* spell. That can get you part of the way there (though at the time of this writing you still can't polymorph anything into adamantine).

The Dungeon Master's Guide

This is where the special materials live. The rules for what it means to have an adamantine weapon—and what it costs to make one—stay here. We reworked some of our special magic weapons (the holy avenger is still your best weapon for fighting demons) and placed special materials, aligned weapons, and other items built to bypass (or grant) damage reduction throughout the relevant parts of the book.

The Monster Manual

Damage reduction affects the *Monster Manual* extensively, but you'll be happy to know that the 3.5 upgrade to the DR system really improves the way the monsters work in playtests. The revised system helps balance monsters much more accurately, and this has spilled over to more accurate Challenge Ratings and monsters that are simply easier and more fun to run.

I can already see hear two questions coming up: First, how will this new DR system affect existing monsters, particularly creatures from other monster books like *Monster Manual II* and *Fiend Folio?* Second, what happens if you mix and match DR?

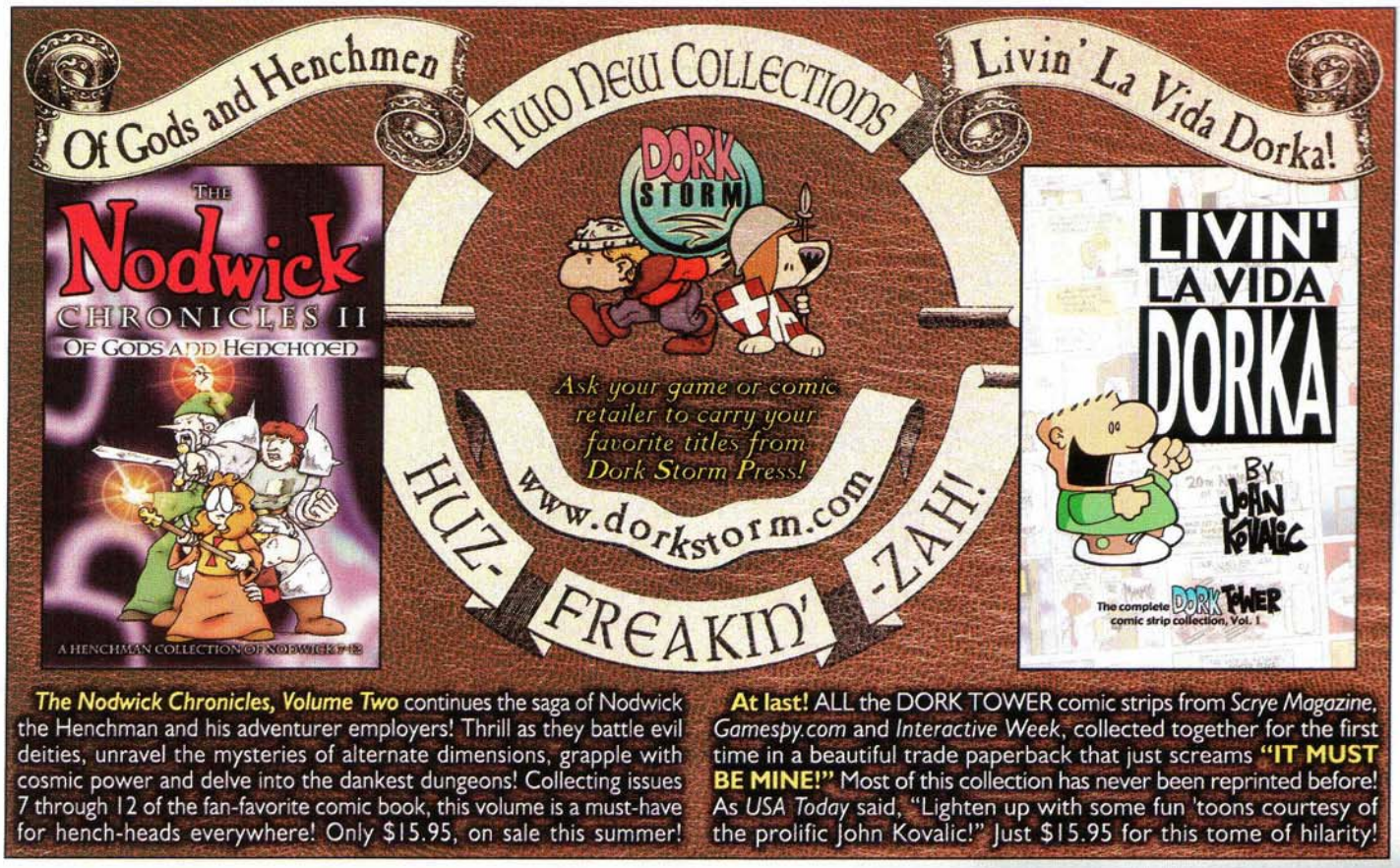
Well, the answer to the first question should be encouraging. Since we've been working on this system for quite some time, we've figured out some simple ways to "convert" monsters from 3.0 books into the 3.5 DR system pretty intuitively. With a few exceptions, most monsters have DR indicators based on types. Demons, for example, are chaotic evil creatures from a chaotic evil place. It seems pretty intuitive that those who have damage reduction should be vulnerable to good weapons, doesn't it? As far as the numbers go, the *Fiend Folio* was designed with these new numbers in mind, so you shouldn't have to change a thing. The *Monster Manual II* and other monster books might require a few tweaks, but nothing extensive, and it's our intention to put one of those handy James Wyatt-inspired (and possibly James Wyatt-created) spreadsheets up on our website, for free. We won't do it until 3.5 hits the streets, but you won't need it until then, anyway.

If you decide the old version of DR worked for you, you don't need it at all. Play with what works, that's our motto. We're just trying to make things work better.

To answer the second question, that's what really makes this DR system even more fun and more flexible than the original. You can create monsters that have "DR 10/magic, lawful" or "DR magic or lawful" or any other combination. The first example would mean you'd need a lawfully aligned, magic weapon to bypass the creature's DR (hello, 10th-level monk!); the second indicates that a magic weapon or a lawful weapon will do the job.

Same Time, Next Month

That's about it. You're back to the present. I hope the strange trip through time and design philosophy has been enjoyable. For more information on the upcoming 3.5 revision, go check out our website at **www.wizards.com/dnd.** D


Of Gods and Henchmen
Two New Collections
Livin' La Vida Dorka!
The Nodwick Chronicles II
Of Gods and Henchmen
A Henchman Collection of Nodwick 7-12
Dork Storm
Ask your game or comic retailer to carry your favorite titles from Dork Storm Press!
www.dorkstorm.com
Huz-Freakin'-Zah!
Livin' La Vida Dorka
By John Kovalic
The complete Dork Tower comic strip collection, Vol. 1

The Nodwick Chronicles, Volume Two continues the saga of Nodwick the Henchman and his adventurer employers! Thrill as they battle evil deities, unravel the mysteries of alternate dimensions, grapple with cosmic power and delve into the dankest dungeons! Collecting issues 7 through 12 of the fan-favorite comic book, this volume is a must-have for hench-heads everywhere! Only $15.95, on sale this summer!

At last! ALL the DORK TOWER comic strips from *Scrye Magazine*, *Gamespy.com* and *Interactive Week*, collected together for the first time in a beautiful trade paperback that just screams **"IT MUST BE MINE!"** Most of this collection has never been reprinted before! As *USA Today* said, "Lighten up with some fun 'toons courtesy of the prolific John Kovalic!" Just $15.95 for this tome of hilarity!

ICE

WIND DALE 2

by Clifford Horowitz

Icewind Dale II is another of several recent computer adventures set in the frozen northern lands of Faerûn. In this one, the action moves north from Neverwinter to Ten Towns. In the game, a mysterious movement operating under the banner of the Chimera has pulled together a massive force of goblins, orcs, trolls, giants, and other creatures, forming a united front against Ten Towns. Your mercenary force is the last of only a few units to make it upriver from Luskan; shortly after you set out, the goblinoid armies gained a stranglehold on the waterways, choking off the only feasible route by which additional forces might have arrived. Your small band must now accomplish what whole armies were supposed to do—save Ten Towns and rout the enemy.

This game adheres more solidly to the D&D 3rd Edition rules than any that came before. The fact that it lets you play an entire party of six adventurers means that you can exploit some of finer points of 3E combat tactics. At the same time, however, *Icewind Dale II* is very clearly a FORGOTTEN REALMS game. Fans of that setting are sure to love the subraces (including drow) that have been added, as well as the orders available to monks, clerics, and paladins.

Among the unique elements of *Icewind Dale II* are its puzzles. One of these is a game unto itself, called battle squares, which your characters can play to their hearts' delight. While perhaps not the stuff of legends, a few matches of this game can certainly make your sessions quite memorable. Not only that, you can extract enough usable material from it to create a unique challenge for the would-be legends in your tabletop D&D games.

BATTLE SQUARES

Part game and part training exercise, battle squares is primarily a combat puzzle. The playing field is more like an apparatus than anything else, consisting of a checkered field three squares across and three squares wide. Along the perimeter are eleven levers, with one standing apart from the others. In the center square of the board stands an ice golem.

In the computer game, this room serves as a plot device completely unrelated to the rest of the game, but that doesn't mean you can't extract something more significant for your own campaign. For example, consider building a scenario like the one below for use in a dungeon or castle.

PLAY ROUGH

The version of battlesquares outlined below is suitable for a party of four 5th-level player characters, but it can easily be scaled for characters of higher or lower level.

Battle Squares Background

Many years ago, Bartok the Bold carved himself a small barony from the wild countryside, personally braving every hazard and fighting every monster that stood in his way. Faced with such relentless determination, the land had no choice but to yield, and eventually the small patch of countryside he

called his own became tame enough to accept an entire community.

Bartok's rule was harsh but fair. As long as his people performed their duties in good faith, he was willing to show lenience in hard times. But woe to the person who tried to shirk responsibility. Various horrid creatures that lived around the outskirts of the barony feasted well on such outcasts.

And so the mighty Bartok became quite distressed when he noticed his own son, who had been born to nobility and wealth, growing up soft and spoiled. The lad showed neither aptitude nor love for the sword, and he had no interest in anything even remotely challenging.

To remedy the situation, Bartok had the boy's room converted into a trial chamber. If his son wanted anything—money, finery, or even food—he would have to fight for it first. History offers no record of whether this tactic was successful, but Bartok's barony came to a violent end not too long thereafter. This fact suggests that his training room might have been too effective.

Although Bartok's estate now lies in ruins, the training room remains intact. The brave and the bold can still test their mettle there and seek rewards.

Hooks

The player characters can be drawn to the training room in a number of ways. Use one of the following ideas, or create your own.

The Favor

A noble fop approaches the PCs, begging for their aid. The many bruises and cuts showing through his torn clothes testify that he has taken quite a beating, but he does not appear to be seriously wounded. It seems that he borrowed his sister's best sword to go on a fine adventure, then lost it in a game of skill. His sister will disown him and probably add to the wounds he has suffered unless he returns the sword, but he can't recover it himself. Surely this intrepid band of adventurers can do this small favor for him? He'd be willing to pay up to 200 gp each for their services.

The Test

Rumors of a competition start circulating through town. According to the tales, those who can prove their worth will be rewarded according to the skill they demonstrate. The gathering will be held a few days from now, in the ruins of an old castle. No one knows the name of the event's sponsor, but all who have seen him agree that he is a large, well-muscled warrior.

Battle Squares Room

This room can be used at any point during an adventure. You can start the action here if your plot allows it (see The Test, above), or you can incorporate it into a larger wilderness or dungeon adventure.

When the PCs arrive at this location, read the following aloud to them.

> This room is a perfect square, 30 feet by 30 feet. Dominating its center is a 15-foot square of made of black and white floor tiles, each 5 feet on a side. The tiles are set in a checkerboard pattern, three wide and three deep. The square is edged with wood, giving it the appearance of a game board.
>
> In the center space stands a stone statue of a bald warrior. Judging from its decorated armor and the beautifully carved crown atop its head, the statue depicts some warrior king of old. The figure wields a large sword in one hand, and with the other it holds a tablet tucked against its chest.
>
> A trio of levers, each nearly three feet tall, is set in the floor along the right wall. The two nearest levers are tilted toward the wall, but the one at the far end tilts the opposite direction, toward the center of the room. On the opposite wall is a single lever that looks just like the others. It too is tilted toward the wall.
>
> In the far wall is an open doorway, flanked by simple columns and crowned with a gleaming plaque that reads: "The rewards are yours for the taking, if you can fight your way to them. Cut yourself a straight path through the board, and all that you see is yours." Beyond the doorway is darkness.

The Game Board

The board described above is a battle squares board. The statue in the center is a stone golem that serves as moderator for the game. It uses its *+3 greatsword* only against those who attack it first. The moment an aggressor breaks off her assault, the golem ceases fighting also.

The three grouped levers are used to set the difficulty level of the game. An engraving in the wall above each one defines the option it represents. The image above the lever at the far end (the one currently activated) is an empty hand (easy). The center lever's image is a hand holding a dagger (medium), and the image above the nearest lever is a hand wielding a sword (difficult). The game is keyed to the competence level of Bartok's son at the time of the barony's ruin, so the challenge ratings for the three difficulty levels are 4, 5, and 6 respectively.

The lone lever near the other wall starts and ends the game. It is marked with an engraving of an open door.

The doorway on the far side of the room is blocked with a *wall of force* that dissipates only after the challenger has won a game of battle squares. Although it is masked by darkness at first, the room beyond the doorway lights up (via a *light* spell) as soon as anyone touches a lever or approaches within 5 feet of the doorway. Under normal circumstances, this 10-foot-square room would remain empty until the challenger set the game parameters, but because several recent challengers lost their matches (see The Prize Room, below), the room currently contains a scant bit of treasure, piled in the center. A well-crafted rapier, a glittering ring, and a pair of glass vials held in a leather strap are visible in the heap.

Starting the Game

Several *magic mouth* spells enable the golem in the center of the board to instruct those who come to play the game and inspire them in Bartok's tough-love manner. As soon as anyone sets foot on the checkered section of floor, the golem animates and confronts the newcomer. Turning its head toward the nearest character on the board, it points to the three levers along the wall and says, "Choose your desire, and your willingness to fight for it." The golem repeats this instruction once per round until either the checkered floor is empty or a lever is pulled, but it takes no other action unless attacked (see above).

Only one of the three grouped levers can be activated at any one time, and pulling one resets the others. If the PCs choose the lever marked with a hand, the golem grumbles, "Are you not ambitious, or are you merely a coward?" If they choose the one marked with a dagger, the golem says, "An even match, or is it? We shall see." If the group chooses

the lever marked with a sword, the golem says, "Ambitious pup. Let's hope your skill is as great as your greed."

The treasure corresponding to the selected level of challenge (see The Prize Room, below) appears in the far room when the lever is pulled. If the room has not already lit up, it does so now, displaying the treasure clearly throughout the match. (Bartok thought that showing his son what he was fighting for would give the lad a greater incentive to fight.)

If the characters do not pull the lone lever that starts the game within 4 rounds of setting the challenge level, the golem points to it and issues the following instructions.

> Very well then. Start the match and cut yourself a path to your desire—a straight path, mind you. Weaving a crooked way will only take you longer. Cry mercy at your own shame."

As before, the golem repeats this message once per round until the characters either pull the lone lever or depart. If they choose the former action, they are committed to playing the game. The golem walks to the room's entrance and blocks it with its body, refusing to budge until the game is over. The PCs must bull rush the golem, overrun it, or slay it to get out of the room before the match is over.

Playing Battle Squares

If the PCs pull the start lever, read the following aloud to the players.

> With a grinding sound, the golem walks to the doorway by which you entered and takes a stance there, planting its sword tip on the floor with a muted clang. Settling its granite hand on the pommel, it regards you sternly for a moment before speaking again in its deep, hoarse voice.
>
> "Face a foe for the right to place your mark upon a space. Defeat the foe in one minute or less to claim a square. If both sides stand after one minute, you forfeit the square to me. If the foe fells you, you forfeit the game and prove yourself unworthy of what you already have.
>
> "Now, choose your square."

At its most basic, battle squares is a simple game of tic-tac-toe, with a slight twist. The PCs may choose any square they wish by pointing to it, standing upon it, or verbally stating which square they want. The choice must be made as a group because the game allows only one square to be claimed at a time. Should two or more PCs try to select different squares, the game recognizes only the first selection made. If multiple choices were indicated simultaneously, it chooses randomly between them.

To claim the square they have selected, the PCs must defeat a summoned creature. Roll d% and consult

the appropriate column of the table on page 80 to determine which creature appears to fight for each square. Roll once for each square.

The PCs need not occupy their selected square during the fight. The battle can take up any amount of space on the board, and the combatants can move about the room as desired. The PCs have 10 rounds in which to bring their foe to 0 hit points or below. Nothing is illegal in these matches, so the PCs can cast spells or utilize any ability at their disposal.

Victory for the PCs means they gain the selected square. If the summoned monster is still alive after 10 rounds, it disappears and the game's mark appears on the square. Any character brought to 0 hit points or below during the fight is automatically stabilized, though the game provides no other healing or aid. Summoned monsters ignore downed characters, since Bartok was interested in providing his son with tough lessons, not killing him.

After the PCs win a fight, the golem calls for them to choose another square. It continues to issue that instruction once per round until they comply. If they have not done so after 10 minutes, the golem warns the characters that the game will choose for them if they cannot decide. After another 5 rounds of inaction on the PC's part, the golem announces the game's selection and a creature appears to fight for that square.

If the game marks three consecutive squares, or the entire party falls in combat, the PCs lose. The party can also forfeit the game at any time (even in the middle of combat) by either pushing back the start lever or shouting "Mercy!"

If the PCs lose, the golem calls out the following message in a resounding tone.

> "Defeat! You are spoiled and do not deserve what you've already been given. Until you prove yourself worthy of your possessions, you will not have them!"

The golem then strides toward the party and attempts to strip each PC in turn of her equipment. Resistance is met with blows to subdue. If the PCs overcome the golem, they are free to leave. Otherwise, it loots their equipment, taking everything except simple clothing and piling it on the floor, from whence it teleports into the sealed room. The items remain sealed in the prize room for one month, available to anyone who wins a battle squares match of any difficulty level. After a month, the room clears itself, teleporting the items to a remote vault from which they can be randomly called to fill the prize room for later matches.

If the PCs win, read the following aloud.

> The golem says, "Very good. You may take what you have earned."

The Prize Room

The *wall of force* disappears, and the PCs are free to claim their prize. What they find in the treasure chamber depends on the game they played, since the level of difficulty determines not only the challenge rating of the creature summoned, but also the value of the reward in the room beyond. The game's

NEW FROM
ASPECT

MICHAEL MOORCOCK
AUTHOR OF THE DREAMTHIEF'S DAUGHTER

THE SKRAYLING TREE
THE ALBINO IN AMERICA

Elric of Melniboné returns in a thrilling new Eternal Champion novel from award-winning author Michael Moorcock!

"Moorcock stalwarts rejoice! The Eternal Champion is back."
—*Booklist*

"A gripping and ambitious tale."
—*Realms of Fantasy* on *The Dreamthief's Daughter*

"Sword and sorcery that stays true to its genre while reaching beyond it."
—*Denver Post* on *The Dreamthief's Daughter*

AVAILABLE IN HARDCOVER

ASPECT WHERE IMAGINATION KNOWS NO BOUNDS

An AOL Time Warner Book Group Company
Visit our Web site at www.twbookmark.com

original treasure stores long ago ran dry, but the failures of would-be heroes have kept the prize room well stocked. Although its gifts are far different from those it originally bestowed, the game continues to dispense winnings to the victors.

If the PCs win an easy game, their reward consists of 40 pp, 500 gp, 1,800 cp, a small bloodstone worth 30 gp, 5 flasks of acid, 4 flasks of holy water, a mighty composite shortbow (+2 Strength bonus), and a Small suit of full plate.

Winning a medium game earns them 40,000 cp, 1,000 sp, 300 gp, a silver pearl worth 120 gp, a pink pearl worth 100 gp, a rough star rose quartz worth 30 gp, a bit of blue quartz worth 13 gp, a fine cut emerald worth 13,000 gp, two applications of *oil of timelessness*, and a sturdy, well-worn backpack that is actually a *Heward's handy haversack*.

The treasure for a difficult game consists of 7,000 sp, 1,200 gp, a bit of onyx worth 30 gp, an aquamarine worth 600 gp, a red garnet worth 120 gp, a black pearl worth 700 gp, a jeweled electrum ring worth 6,000 gp, a masterwork dagger with a star sapphire in the pommel worth 1,200 gp, a *+1 breastplate*, a wood and metal wand decorated with a menagerie of carved creatures (a *wand of summon monster II* with 35 charges left), and a scroll of *sleep*.

If the PCs came in search of the noble boy's rapier mentioned in The Favor, above, that is also part of the treasure they win, regardless of the level of game they played.

BATTLE SQUARES CREATURES

Roll:	Easy:	Medium:	Difficult:
00-10	Aranea	Basilisk	Belker
11-20	Barghest	Ettin	Digester
21-30	Dire boar	Girallon	Gargantuan zombie
31-40	Ettercap	Greater barghest	Huge monstrous scorpion
41-50	Gargoyle	Hydra (6 heads)	Hydra (7 heads)
51-60	Hydra (5 heads)	Large earth elemental	Juvenile black dragon
61-70	Minotaur	Manitcore	Lamia
71-80	Otyugh	Troll	Shambling mound
81-90	Owlbear	Winter wolf	Xill
91-00	Rhino	Wraith	Will-o'-wisp

BATTLE SQUARES VARIATIONS

A standard game of battle squares is a fight between the party and a single summoned monster. It lasts 10 rounds or until one side is vanquished, whichever comes first. The defender wins any fight that does not result in a kill within the allotted time. The prize offered is usually a mix of items whose total value is appropriate for three encounters of the appropriate challenge rating. But there are many variables you can introduce to make the game more challenging or more interesting. The ideas below are only suggestions; you can use these or come up with additional ideas of your own. If you decide to allow one or more of the variants below, you could even add a setting to the board that lets would-be players choose the version they prefer before beginning a match.

Champion Combat

In this variant, only one PC can fight for a square at a time. Whoever the party selects as its champion must face the summoned monster in single combat.

If you wish, you can physically segregate the combatants from the rest of the party. The others might be teleported to a waiting area, or the two combatants might be teleported elsewhere to fight. Alternatively, the combat area could be sealed off by moving walls or magic barriers (such as a *wall of force* or *wall of fire*), or the golem gamekeeper might simply usher everyone else out of the room before it allows the game to begin. If you use the physical separation method, you might allow the noncombatants to tend their champion between battles, or to switch champions for the next fight.

Another option is to let the other PCs witness the fight but retain a physical barrier to keep them out of melee combat. In this arrangement, you can allow the watchers to aid their comrade with spells and ranged attacks if you wish, even though they cannot get close enough to participate in melee combat. (If you decide on this tactic, be sure to scale the CR to account for additional combatants. See the sidebar in the "Dungeoncraft" column in *Dragon* #301 for advice on how to do this.) Alternatively, you can allow the other PCs to be present but forbid them from assisting their comrade. Simply have the golem explain that any interference will result in a penalty. Perhaps the PCs simply lose the square automatically if anyone breaks the rule, or maybe the monster is instantly replaced by a more challenging one. Or perhaps each offender gets his own monster to fight. Using this last penalty, however, means you must decide in advance whether or not the outcomes of these additional fights affect the win of the square.

Whole-Party Solo Combat

This option is similar to the one described above, except that all the PCs get to participate. In this variant, the game isolates the individual party members (using the methods described above) and summons a monster for each character to fight. Winning the majority of the fights allows the party to claim the square.

Group Summoning

In this variant, the board summons groups of monsters instead of a single foe. Collections of animals (such as packs of wolves) are an obvious choice, but the creatures summoned need not be of the same kind. Consider throwing together different combinations of creatures (such as the ones mentioned in the "Tag Team Terrors" article in *Dragon* #288) to challenge the characters.

Trap Squares

In this variant, the game arms certain squares in the battlefield with traps. The specific traps can be anything you wish—pit traps, electrified floors, arrow or poison dart traps, or the like. The creatures summoned to fight the PCs have no better idea where the traps lie than the characters do, although both sides might become aware of trapped locations during the course of the battle. This feature favors neither side; it simply adds a complication to the combat.

Trap Levers

If the game can have trapped squares, why not trapped levers? If you want to include this feature, you could hide the levers that control the game among several that activate traps instead. Or you might decide that the levers that operate the game become keyed to traps while a battle is in progress. Characters who think they can escape by pulling the game start lever in the middle of a tough fight might discover that the same lever now opens a trapdoor over a spiked pit instead. Or worse yet, perhaps it summons additional monsters or heals the one already in combat.

Variable Challenge

There's no reason why the challenge rating for each difficulty level of the game has to be restricted to a single value. You can broaden the categories of easy, medium, and difficult by creating creature tables that encompass

two or more challenge ratings each. Just be careful not to vary them too far from your PCs' average level. If you make the CR too low, the game won't be a challenge; if you make it too high, the party will be slaughtered.

Alternatively, you could increase the number of levers available for setting the difficulty level. Each one might still summon only creatures of a single challenge rating, but there would be more CRs available to choose from.

Theme Boards

In this variant, a particular battle squares board summons monsters of only one type. For instance, a board of bone and ash might call only undead

creatures. Another theme board might call only devils. To develop a slightly more obscure theme, you could create a random list of monsters, then apply the same template to all of them.

Small Rewards

In this version of the game, the PCs are rewarded with a minor beneficial spell effect every time they win a square. Although they still have to win the game to get the treasure, the little boosts along the way make reaching the goal easier.

The reward bestowed could as simple as a *cure light wounds* spell after every victorious bout, or something more substantive, such as a *stoneskin* that affects the whole party. To keep the game even, you could grant summoned monsters the same benefit during any bout that immediately follows a victory for the game.

The Prize

Instead of a pile of mixed treasure such as the PCs might find in a dungeon, the entire game could be played for a single item. This option works best if the item is legendary, powerful, or both. Since there is only a single prize, a battle squares game using this option should offer only one level of difficulty.

USING BATTLE SQUARES

There are literally dozens of ways to incorporate a game of battle squares into a campaign. If the board is part of an ancient ruin, as it is in the storyline

presented above, it can function like a trap. Once the PCs have pulled the start lever, they are committed; they must either fight their way through a complete game or defeat the golem before they can leave.

Alternatively, the game could function as the key to another location. In this variation, the game room has another door that won't open—or even just the image of a door. Only PCs who prove themselves worthy by winning a game at a certain difficulty level can open it. You can add complexity to this option by keying a door to each difficulty level of the game, or even just changing the destination of the single door based on the quality of the win.

Battle squares could also be a popular sport in inhabited areas, especially among nobles who enjoy human chess and similar pastimes. The complexity of the battle squares board and the spells required to create it mark any court that indulges in this game as truly opulent. In such an environment, participation in battle squares games might even become a status symbol of sorts. Two nobles betting on the outcome of the game could designate champions to fight in turn for the squares their patrons select. (Such champions battle creatures summoned by the board, as in the standard version above, not one another.) A champion's defeat grants the square to the opponent rather than to the game. In this version, prizes are usually awarded by the nobles or monarch in person rather than magically through the game. battle squares games of this sort only rarely require the champions to fight to the death, since nobles tend to invest a great deal in their representatives and gain status through their successes. In fact, besting a particular noble's champion in a game of battle squares might be the only way that the PCs can gain the attention of a ruler or courtier with whom they need to speak.

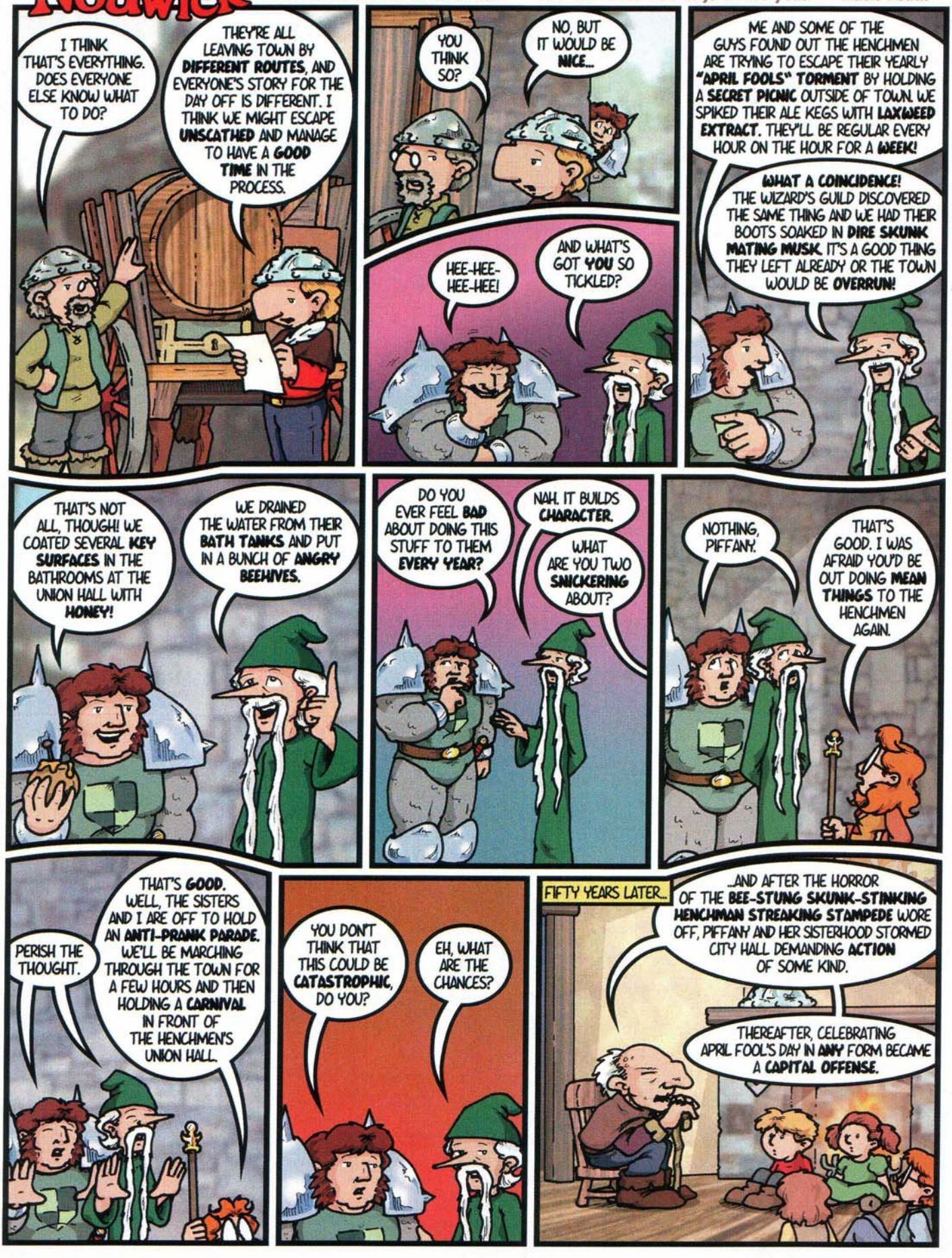
A local monarch might also use a battle squares board as a form of trial by combat. Instead of simply fighting a selected opponent in an arena, a person accused of a crime must best his or her accusers at the game. As with other forms of trial by combat, champions would be available in most cases to do the actual fighting. As an additional twist, however, the constabulary might take note of what kinds of creatures the board summons to fight for each side. For example, if a defendant at a murder trial winds up facing multiple undead, or someone accused of trafficking with demons faces several denizens of the Abyss while fighting for squares, the nature of the opposition might be taken into account during sentencing should the defendant lose.

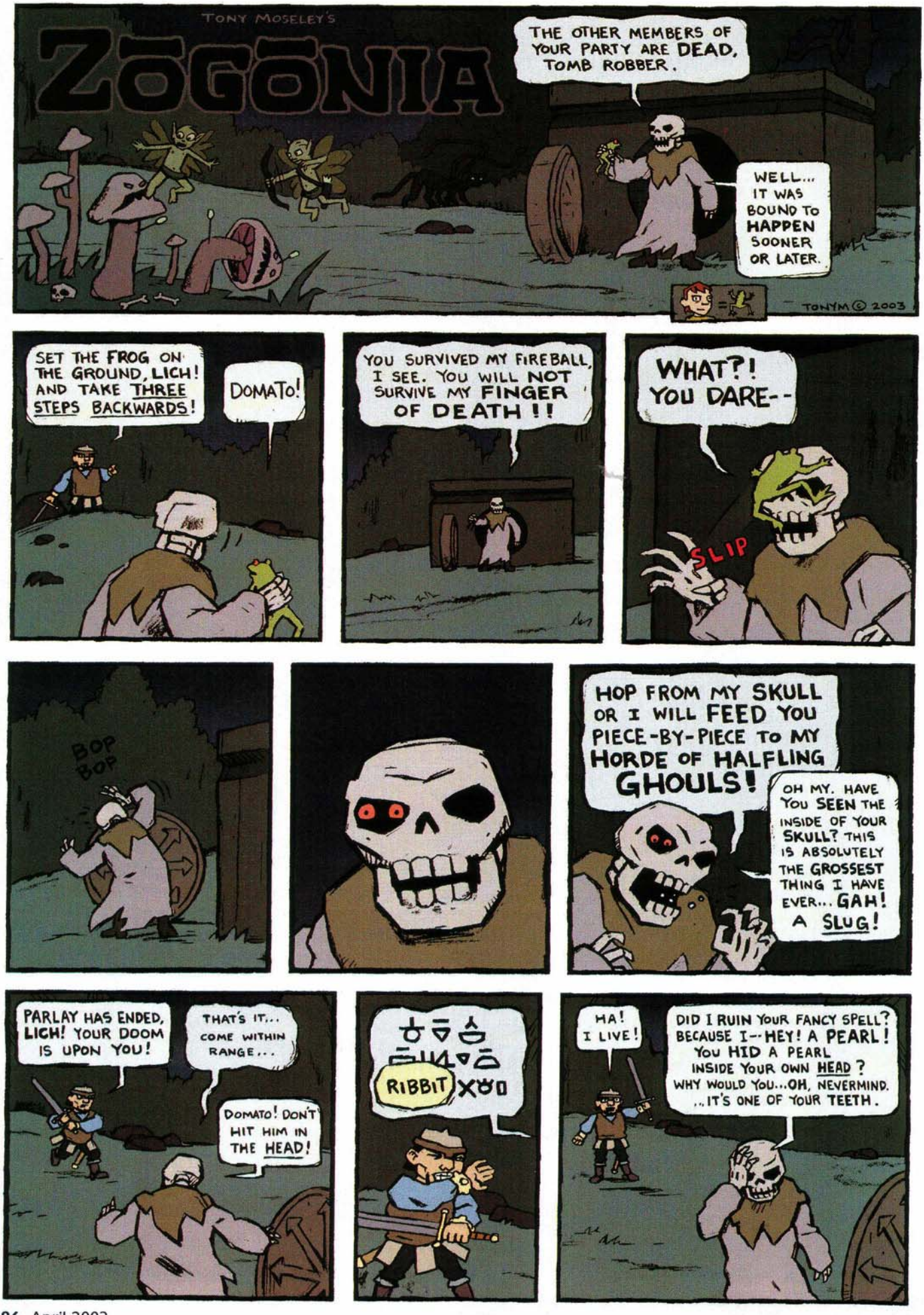
A battle squares game might also be useful as a training tool or a test for advancement. As with noble courts, academies boasting battle squares boards should be prestigious and rich, but not necessarily soft or pampering. A character of nearly any class could hone some aspect of his or her abilities here. For example, a barbarian could stoke his rage and try to maintain it for the length of the game. A fighter could practice specific feats. A rogue could look for the telltale signs of a new summons and try to pounce quickly, possibly catching opponents flat-footed. Spellcasters can train to fight without support by honing their ability to ignore the distractions of melee or developing mobile tactics that allow them to stay out of reach. Nearly any organization whose members are frequently involved in combat could benefit from the game, provided that the group could afford it. D

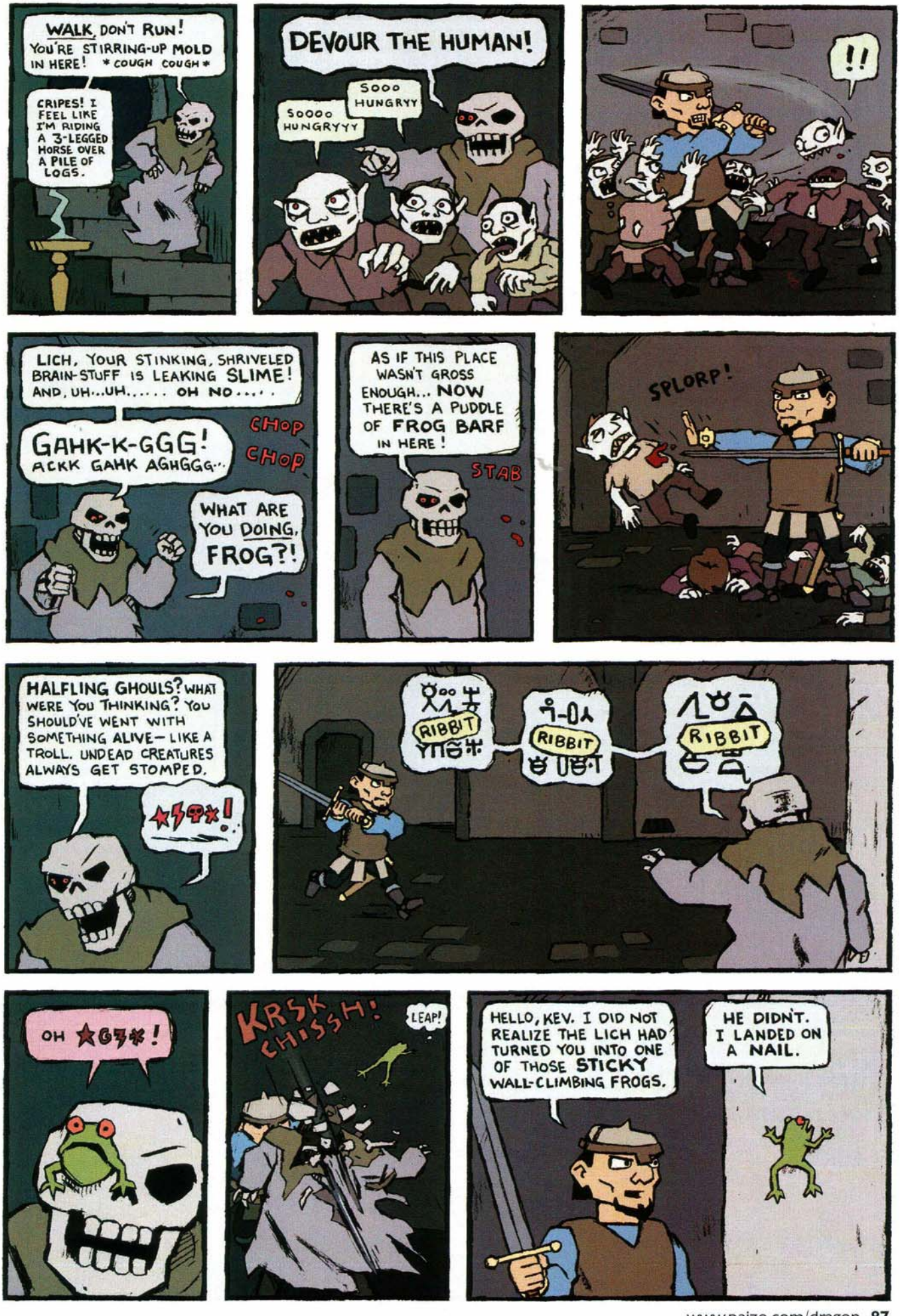
Nodwick

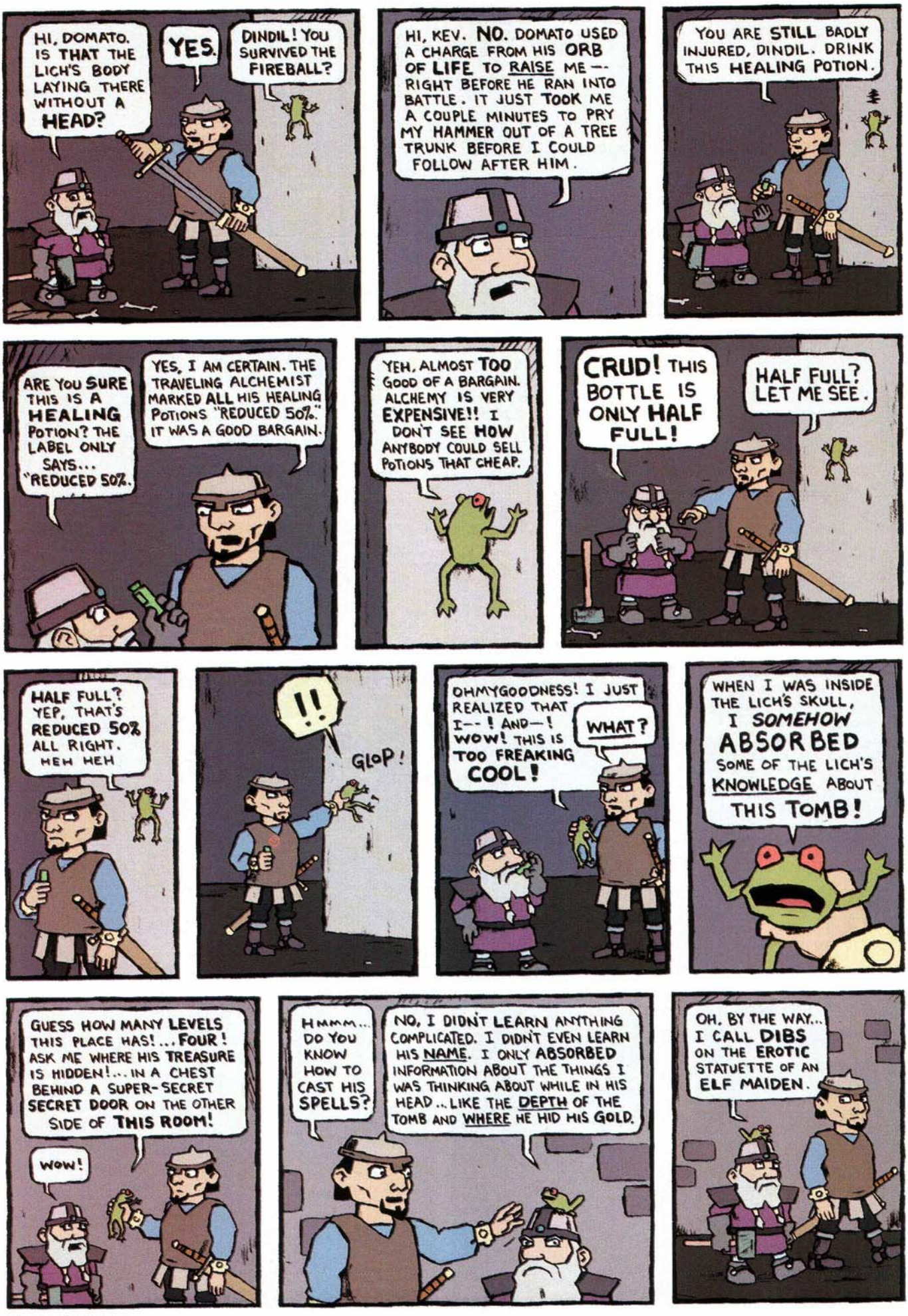
by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com

"The First of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year." -- Mark Twain

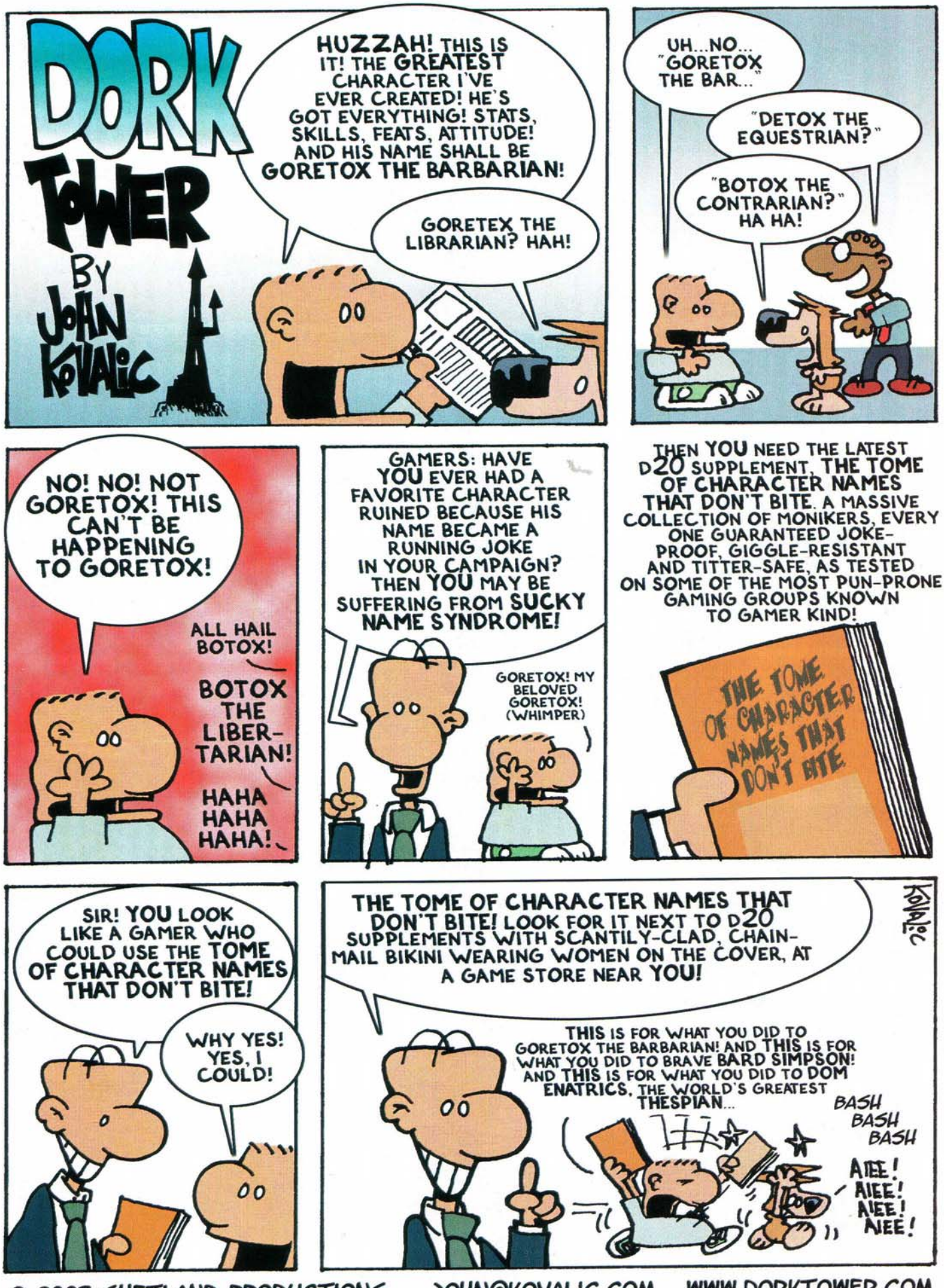

I THINK THAT'S EVERYTHING. DOES EVERYONE ELSE KNOW WHAT TO DO?
THEY'RE ALL LEAVING TOWN BY DIFFERENT ROUTES, AND EVERYONE'S STORY FOR THE DAY OFF IS DIFFERENT. I THINK WE MIGHT ESCAPE UNSCATHED AND MANAGE TO HAVE A GOOD TIME IN THE PROCESS.
YOU THINK SO?
NO, BUT IT WOULD BE NICE...
HEE-HEE-HEE-HEE!
AND WHAT'S GOT YOU SO TICKLED?
ME AND SOME OF THE GUYS FOUND OUT THE HENCHMEN ARE TRYING TO ESCAPE THEIR YEARLY "APRIL FOOLS" TORMENT BY HOLDING A SECRET PICNIC OUTSIDE OF TOWN. WE SPIKED THEIR ALE KEGS WITH LAXWEED EXTRACT. THEY'LL BE REGULAR EVERY HOUR ON THE HOUR FOR A WEEK!
WHAT A COINCIDENCE! THE WIZARD'S GUILD DISCOVERED THE SAME THING AND WE HAD THEIR BOOTS SOAKED IN DIRE SKUNK MATING MUSK. IT'S A GOOD THING THEY LEFT ALREADY OR THE TOWN WOULD BE OVERRUN!
THAT'S NOT ALL, THOUGH! WE COATED SEVERAL KEY SURFACES IN THE BATHROOMS AT THE UNION HALL WITH HONEY!
WE DRAINED THE WATER FROM THEIR BATH TANKS AND PUT IN A BUNCH OF ANGRY BEEHIVES.
DO YOU EVER FEEL BAD ABOUT DOING THIS STUFF TO THEM EVERY YEAR?
NAH. IT BUILDS CHARACTER.
WHAT ARE YOU TWO SNICKERING ABOUT?
NOTHING, PIFFANY.
THAT'S GOOD. I WAS AFRAID YOU'D BE OUT DOING MEAN THINGS TO THE HENCHMEN AGAIN.
PERISH THE THOUGHT.
THAT'S GOOD. WELL, THE SISTERS AND I ARE OFF TO HOLD AN ANTI-PRANK PARADE. WE'LL BE MARCHING THROUGH THE TOWN FOR A FEW HOURS AND THEN HOLDING A CARNIVAL IN FRONT OF THE HENCHMEN'S UNION HALL.
YOU DON'T THINK THAT THIS COULD BE CATASTROPHIC, DO YOU?
EH, WHAT ARE THE CHANCES?
FIFTY YEARS LATER...
...AND AFTER THE HORROR OF THE BEE-STUNG SKUNK-STINKING HENCHMAN STREAKING STAMPEDE WORE OFF, PIFFANY AND HER SISTERHOOD STORMED CITY HALL DEMANDING ACTION OF SOME KIND.
THEREAFTER, CELEBRATING APRIL FOOL'S DAY IN ANY FORM BECAME A CAPITAL OFFENSE.


TONY MOSELEY'S
ZOGONIA
THE OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR PARTY ARE DEAD, TOMB ROBBER.
WELL... IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER.
TONYM © 2003
SET THE FROG ON THE GROUND, LICH! AND TAKE THREE STEPS BACKWARDS!
DOMATO!
YOU SURVIVED MY FIREBALL, I SEE. YOU WILL NOT SURVIVE MY FINGER OF DEATH!!
WHAT?! YOU DARE--
SLIP
BOP BOP
HOP FROM MY SKULL OR I WILL FEED YOU PIECE-BY-PIECE TO MY HORDE OF HALFLING GHOULS!
OH MY. HAVE YOU SEEN THE INSIDE OF YOUR SKULL? THIS IS ABSOLUTELY THE GROSSEST THING I HAVE EVER... GAH! A SLUG!
PARLAY HAS ENDED, LICH! YOUR DOOM IS UPON YOU!
THAT'S IT... COME WITHIN RANGE...
DOMATO! DON'T HIT HIM IN THE HEAD!
RIBBIT
HA! I LIVE!
DID I RUIN YOUR FANCY SPELL? BECAUSE I--HEY! A PEARL! YOU HID A PEARL INSIDE YOUR OWN HEAD? WHY WOULD YOU...OH, NEVERMIND. ...IT'S ONE OF YOUR TEETH.

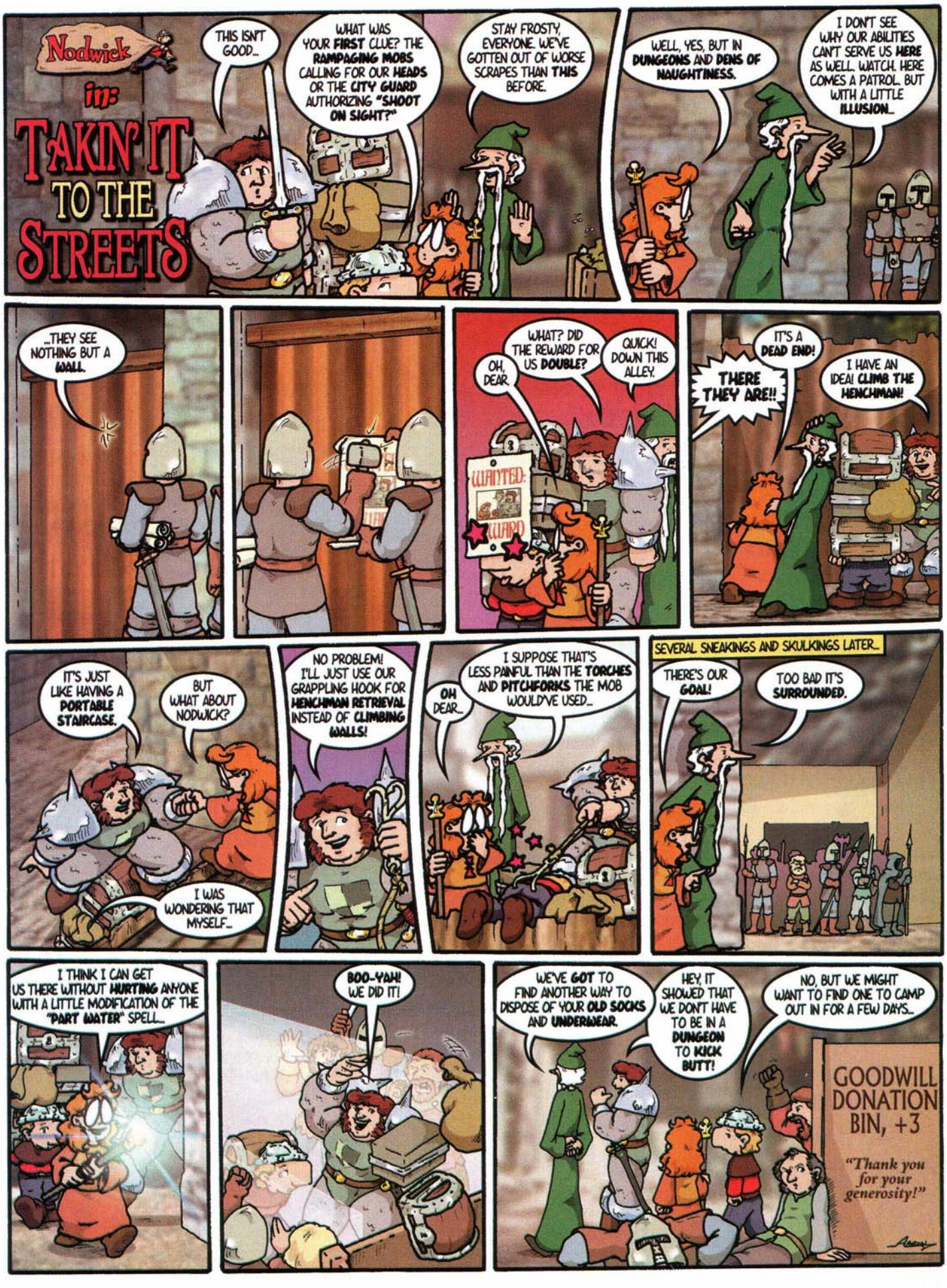

WALK, DON'T RUN! YOU'RE STIRRING-UP MOLD IN HERE! * COUGH COUGH *
CRIPES! I FEEL LIKE I'M RIDING A 3-LEGGED HORSE OVER A PILE OF LOGS.
DEVOUR THE HUMAN!
SOOO HUNGRYY
SOOOO HUNGRYYY
!!
LICH, YOUR STINKING, SHRIVELED BRAIN-STUFF IS LEAKING SLIME! AND, UH...UH..... OH NO.....
GAHK-K-GGG! ACKK GAHK AGHGGG...
CHOP CHOP
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, FROG?!
AS IF THIS PLACE WASN'T GROSS ENOUGH... NOW THERE'S A PUDDLE OF FROG BARF IN HERE!
STAB
SPLORP!
HALFLING GHOULS? WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? YOU SHOULD'VE WENT WITH SOMETHING ALIVE— LIKE A TROLL. UNDEAD CREATURES ALWAYS GET STOMPED.
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
RIBBIT
OH ★G7*!
KRSK CHISSH!
LEAP!
HELLO, KEV. I DID NOT REALIZE THE LICH HAD TURNED YOU INTO ONE OF THOSE STICKY WALL-CLIMBING FROGS.
HE DIDN'T. I LANDED ON A NAIL.


HI, DOMATO. IS THAT THE LICH'S BODY LAYING THERE WITHOUT A HEAD?
YES.
DINDIL! YOU SURVIVED THE FIREBALL?
HI, KEV. NO. DOMATO USED A CHARGE FROM HIS ORB OF LIFE TO RAISE ME -- RIGHT BEFORE HE RAN INTO BATTLE. IT JUST TOOK ME A COUPLE MINUTES TO PRY MY HAMMER OUT OF A TREE TRUNK BEFORE I COULD FOLLOW AFTER HIM.
YOU ARE STILL BADLY INJURED, DINDIL. DRINK THIS HEALING POTION.
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS A HEALING POTION? THE LABEL ONLY SAYS... "REDUCED 50%.
YES, I AM CERTAIN. THE TRAVELING ALCHEMIST MARKED ALL HIS HEALING POTIONS "REDUCED 50%." IT WAS A GOOD BARGAIN.
YEH, ALMOST TOO GOOD OF A BARGAIN. ALCHEMY IS VERY EXPENSIVE!! I DON'T SEE HOW ANYBODY COULD SELL POTIONS THAT CHEAP.
CRUD! THIS BOTTLE IS ONLY HALF FULL!
HALF FULL? LET ME SEE.
HALF FULL? YEP, THAT'S REDUCED 50% ALL RIGHT. HEH HEH
!!
GLOP!
OHMYGOODNESS! I JUST REALIZED THAT I--! AND--! WOW! THIS IS TOO FREAKING COOL!
WHAT?
WHEN I WAS INSIDE THE LICH'S SKULL, I SOMEHOW ABSORBED SOME OF THE LICH'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THIS TOMB!
GUESS HOW MANY LEVELS THIS PLACE HAS!... FOUR! ASK ME WHERE HIS TREASURE IS HIDDEN!... IN A CHEST BEHIND A SUPER-SECRET SECRET DOOR ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS ROOM!
WOW!
HMMM... DO YOU KNOW HOW TO CAST HIS SPELLS?
NO, I DIDN'T LEARN ANYTHING COMPLICATED. I DIDN'T EVEN LEARN HIS NAME. I ONLY ABSORBED INFORMATION ABOUT THE THINGS I WAS THINKING ABOUT WHILE IN HIS HEAD... LIKE THE DEPTH OF THE TOMB AND WHERE HE HID HIS GOLD.
OH. BY THE WAY... I CALL DIBS ON THE EROTIC STATUETTE OF AN ELF MAIDEN.

LATER...
OOO! COINAGE! I WONDER HOW THE LICH GOT SO MUCH...
MAYBE HE READ THIS BOOK... "PAIN AND THE ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH."
DO YOU WANT IT, KEV?
IF IT'S ABOUT KNOCKING PEOPLE UNCONSCIOUS AND ROBBING THEIR BODIES, I ALREADY KNOW HOW TO DO THAT.
DIG DIG
LOOK, A SMALL VIAL OF SOME KIND OF MAGICAL OIL...
GAAA! I KNOW WHAT THAT DOES! IT BREAKS THE ENCHANTMENT OF A POLYMORPH SPELL!!
RUB IT ON ME! RUB IT ON ME!
RUB IT ON HIM, DINDIL.
ME?
HURRY DINDIL! I'M POSITIVE IT WILL CHANGE ME BACK! I HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF THAT OIL FROM THE LICH!
UHH... WHY DON'T WE WAIT UNTIL WE'RE BACK IN TOWN... AND THEN YOU FIND A GIRL TO DO IT?
DOMATO! YOU ARE THE LEADER OF DOMATO'S DELVERS! AS YOUR TRAPSMITH, I INSIST THAT YOU TELL--
RELAX, KEV... I WILL APPLY THE OIL.
I WILL START WITH A SMALL AREA...JUST IN CASE THIS MAGIC OIL IS ACTUALLY A POISON.
POISON? THANKS FOR PUTTING IT ON MY HEAD...
THAT IS PROBABLY A GOOD SIGN.
I HOPE IT WORKS! THEN WE COULD CARRY BACK ALL THE TREASURE IN ONE TRIP!!
HEY! I FEEL TINGLING!
AAAAA
GAHH-AAAAK
AAK!
GGGNNN
HOLD STILL! THERE IS NOT MUCH OIL LEFT!
RUB
RUB
TWO DAYS LATER, BACK IN TOWN...
SO, KEV... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO BUY WITH YOUR SHARE OF THE TREASURE?
YOU HAVE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.


DORK TOWER
BY JOHN KOVALIC
HUZZAH! THIS IS IT! THE GREATEST CHARACTER I'VE EVER CREATED! HE'S GOT EVERYTHING! STATS, SKILLS, FEATS, ATTITUDE! AND HIS NAME SHALL BE GORETOX THE BARBARIAN!
GORETEX THE LIBRARIAN? HAH!
UH...NO... "GORETOX THE BAR..."
"DETOX THE EQUESTRIAN?"
"BOTOX THE CONTRARIAN?" HA HA!
NO! NO! NOT GORETOX! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING TO GORETOX!
ALL HAIL BOTOX!
BOTOX THE LIBER-TARIAN!
HAHA HAHA HAHA!
GAMERS: HAVE YOU EVER HAD A FAVORITE CHARACTER RUINED BECAUSE HIS NAME BECAME A RUNNING JOKE IN YOUR CAMPAIGN? THEN YOU MAY BE SUFFERING FROM SUCKY NAME SYNDROME!
GORETOX! MY BELOVED GORETOX! (WHIMPER)
THEN YOU NEED THE LATEST D20 SUPPLEMENT, THE TOME OF CHARACTER NAMES THAT DON'T BITE. A MASSIVE COLLECTION OF MONIKERS, EVERY ONE GUARANTEED JOKE-PROOF, GIGGLE-RESISTANT AND TITTER-SAFE, AS TESTED ON SOME OF THE MOST PUN-PRONE GAMING GROUPS KNOWN TO GAMER KIND!
THE TOME OF CHARACTER NAMES THAT DON'T BITE
SIR! YOU LOOK LIKE A GAMER WHO COULD USE THE TOME OF CHARACTER NAMES THAT DON'T BITE!
WHY YES! YES, I COULD!
THE TOME OF CHARACTER NAMES THAT DON'T BITE! LOOK FOR IT NEXT TO D20 SUPPLEMENTS WITH SCANTILY-CLAD, CHAIN-MAIL BIKINI WEARING WOMEN ON THE COVER, AT A GAME STORE NEAR YOU!
KOVALIC
THIS IS FOR WHAT YOU DID TO GORETOX THE BARBARIAN! AND THIS IS FOR WHAT YOU DID TO BRAVE BARD SIMPSON! AND THIS IS FOR WHAT YOU DID TO DOM ENATRICS, THE WORLD'S GREATEST THESPIAN...
BASH BASH BASH
AIEE! AIEE! AIEE! AIEE!

© 2003 SHETLAND PRODUCTIONS JOHN@KOVALIC.COM WWW.DORKTOWER.COM


Nodwick
in:
TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS
THIS ISN'T GOOD...
WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CLUE? THE RAMPAGING MOBS CALLING FOR OUR HEADS OR THE CITY GUARD AUTHORIZING "SHOOT ON SIGHT?"
STAY FROSTY, EVERYONE. WE'VE GOTTEN OUT OF WORSE SCRAPES THAN THIS BEFORE.
WELL, YES, BUT IN DUNGEONS AND DENS OF NAUGHTINESS.
I DON'T SEE WHY OUR ABILITIES CAN'T SERVE US HERE AS WELL. WATCH. HERE COMES A PATROL. BUT WITH A LITTLE ILLUSION...
...THEY SEE NOTHING BUT A WALL.
WHAT? DID THE REWARD FOR US DOUBLE?
OH, DEAR.
QUICK! DOWN THIS ALLEY.
WANTED:
IT'S A DEAD END!
THERE THEY ARE!!
I HAVE AN IDEA! CLIMB THE HENCHMAN!
IT'S JUST LIKE HAVING A PORTABLE STAIRCASE.
BUT WHAT ABOUT NODWICK?
I WAS WONDERING THAT MYSELF...
NO PROBLEM! I'LL JUST USE OUR GRAPPLING HOOK FOR HENCHMAN RETRIEVAL INSTEAD OF CLIMBING WALLS!
OH DEAR...
I SUPPOSE THAT'S LESS PAINFUL THAN THE TORCHES AND PITCHFORKS THE MOB WOULD'VE USED...
SEVERAL SNEAKINGS AND SKULKINGS LATER...
THERE'S OUR GOAL!
TOO BAD IT'S SURROUNDED.
I THINK I CAN GET US THERE WITHOUT HURTING ANYONE WITH A LITTLE MODIFICATION OF THE "PART WATER" SPELL...
BOO-YAH! WE DID IT!
WE'VE GOT TO FIND ANOTHER WAY TO DISPOSE OF YOUR OLD SOCKS AND UNDERWEAR.
HEY, IT SHOWED THAT WE DON'T HAVE TO BE IN A DUNGEON TO KICK BUTT!
NO, BUT WE MIGHT WANT TO FIND ONE TO CAMP OUT IN FOR A FEW DAYS...
GOODWILL DONATION BIN, +3
"Thank you for your generosity!"

Issue Number Twenty • Fireseek, 593 CY

Living Greyhawk™ JOURNAL

A Publication of the RPGA Network
Editor: Erik Mona • Campaign Director: Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Contributing Reporters: Jason Bulmahn and David Christ
Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron. —Cuthbertine proverb

CAMPAIGN NEWS

WE'RE SWITCHING MAGAZINES!

This is the last *Living Greyhawk Journal* to appear in *Dragon Magazine*. We're moving over to our sister publication, *Dungeon/Polyhedron Magazine*, which increases frequency to monthly starting in May. Thanks to everyone who followed us here from the stand-alone *Journal* and thanks especially to *Dragon's* staff for making us feel at home in these pages. Give us a look in May (*Dungeon/Polyhedron* #98) for a gargantuan overview of the Bright Desert and in later months for even more exciting Living Greyhawk news and articles. You ain't seen nothing yet!

NEW YEAR, NEW ORDER

Due to changes in the campaign structure and how events are sanctioned, we have created a new system for the ordering of events and downloading scenarios.

Core Scenarios: When you create an event via the ordering system at www.rpga.com, pick core scenarios from the list as normal. You'll receive a link from RPGA HQ that will allow you to download the scenario files.

Regional Scenarios: In Year Three and beyond you will not order specific regional events from the RPGA website. You will instead order a placeholder scenario. For example, the Veluna placeholder may read "VEL03-XX." After ordering one placeholder scenario, head over to the campaign website at http://www.living-greyhawk.com, where you'll find a link to a scenarios page. There you will find PDFs of all the scenarios for every available region and meta-region. Download the event files you need. The files are password protected. Contact your local triad with your event information (Event Code and Date) and they will provide the password to open the scenario. They also will provide the Adventure Record for that scenario, which will allow your players to collect treasure and experience points after the adventure is run.

Meta-Regional Scenarios: Order the meta-regional placeholder instead of the regional one. Contact your local triad for the password and Adventure Record.

This system allows us to get events online and ready for ordering faster and makes it easier for us to make corrections to events with minimal problems.

SWORD OF EARTH

In the summer of 591 CY, brave adventures from across the Flanaess dared to attempt what many called a death sentence. Gathering their most trusted companions, they trekked into the Kron Hills and assaulted the forces of the Temple of Elemental Evil in their new home, the Temple of All Consumption. Though many did not return, the heroes' brave exploits were successful in dealing a heavy blow to the forces of the temple. One of the treasures brought out form those halls was the *Sword of Earth*. This fabled greatsword could slice through the thickest armor and on command could send rocks flying from its shaft to down enemies from afar. Alhough its owners turned the weapon's power to the side of good, it was only a matter of time before its powers faded.

As of Fireseek, 593 CY, the Temple of All Consumption has been destroyed and the Temple of Earth within it thrown down. These events culminated in the Meta-Regional scenario VTF3-01: *Crystal Falls*. Once you have played in this scenario (or March 31st rolls around, whichever comes first), the *Sword of Earth* loses its special powers and becomes a standard *+2 greatsword* with a value of 8,350 gp. Owners of the *Sword of Earth* should make the appropriate modification to their character's Master Item List and note the change on their next Adventure Record.

META-REGIONS

Year Three of the Living Greyhawk Campaign kicks off an exciting new kind of scenario: The Meta-Regional. These scenarios span many regions and bring international plots into focus for adventurers native to the area. Unlike regional scenarios, they can go past APL 12 and are meant as an avenue to support higher-level play in the campaign. We have included some information on each Meta-Region below.

Meta-Region One

The Sheldomar Valley

Circle Representative: Steven Conforti (scon40@aol.com)

Regions: Bissel, Geoff, Gran March, Keoland, Principality of Ulek, Yeomanry

The Sheldomar Valley has a long and troubled history. Once dominated by the terrible lich Vecna, it is a fertile but war-torn place. It is a land where many of the Suel and Oeridians took refuge among the native Flan of the region after the Twin Cataclysms, forming the mighty kingdom of Keoland. The Valley has seen hard times lately: invasions by giants on its western borders, interference by the Scarlet Brotherhood in the south, invasion by evil humanoids of the Pomarj in the east, and the conquering of its northernmost reaches by the nation of Ket. The giants have been driven out of Sterich, and Ket has vacated Bissel, but Geoff and the Principality of Ulek still remain under siege. If not for the assistance of Gran March and the Yeomanry these last years, who knows how long the Sheldomar Valley would remain under the control of the forces of good?

Meta-Region Two

Tuflik, Fals, and Velverdyva Trade Route

Circle Representative: David Christ (wavester@neo.rr.com)

Regions: Dyvers, Ekbir, Ket, Tusmit, Veluna, Verbobonc

Adventure beckons! Disembarking from the Lake of Unknown Depths you're drawn into the bustling mercantile city of Dyvers. Traveling through the Gnarly Forest into the heart of Old Ferrond, the halls of the Viscount of Verbobonc await. All is not well here, as Verbobonc is the uneasy keeper of the ruin known as the Temple of Elemental Evil. Although the temple was destroyed many years ago, its legacy lingers no matter how hard the souls of good men try to forget. To the west lies the Archclericy of Veluna, its people living in harmony as Rao watches over and protects them all. Beyond the Bramblewood Forest lies Ket, the crossroads between the East and West, with its strong military and deft merchants. Across the Yatil mountains lies Tusmit, home of some of the finest weapons and armor in the Baklunish lands. Settled upon the shores of the Dramidj Ocean is possibly the oldest of the Baklunish states, the Caliphate of Ekbir. Adventure, wealth, and danger abound. Are you up to the task of finding it and living to tell the tale?

Meta-Region Three

Iuz's Border States

Circle Representative: Jason Bulmahn (iuztheevil@aol.com)

Regions: Bandit Kingdoms, Furyondy, Highfolk, Perrenland, Shield Lands

Many in the Flanaess believe that Iuz, the ancient Man-God of the Middle Lands, is a spent force. Much recent evidence suggests that Old Wicked has been content to merely tease the fringes of his border states as an annoyance rather than as a true threat. But it takes time to hatch new plots and spawn unmentionable offspring, time to delve deeper into the darkest places, and time to create armies that will not be vulnerable again. Now, the border states of Iuz, who have been rebuilding and reorganizing since the Flight Of Fiends, are about to discover what new nightmare Iuz the Evil is ready to unleash upon the lands of the Flanaess! Are you prepared to fight?

Meta-Region Four

Nyrond and Her Environs

Circle Representative: Craig Hier (craig@hierview.com)

Regions: County of Urnst, Duchy of Urnst, Nyrond, Ratik, Theocracy of the Pale

The fertile lands that once made up the western part of the Great Kingdom are now home to the Kingdom of Nyrond, County and Duchy of Urnst, Theocracy of the Pale, and the Archbarony of Ratik. Political intrigue is rife in the area. The widow Archbaroness of Ratik has all but disappeared from public view, leaving the noble lords to defend themselves against border raids. The traitorous Prince Sewarndt's attempted coup in Nyrond keeps the king ever watching for traitors in his court. Countess Belissica of the County of Urnst aids her neighbors and plays hostess to the exiled Duke of Tenh, trying to strike a balance between aiding him and upsetting others who have eyes on his fallen lands. The noble houses of the Duchy of Urnst have perfected the game of political intrigue, trying to get rid of their enemies and further their own ends. In the Pale, Theocrat Ogon Tillit has fallen ill and the prelates squabble to place themselves in his office. All of this added to the shifting alliances between states and the external threats of Iuz, the Great Kingdom, and Scarlet Brotherhood provide a dangerous and potentially explosive environment. How long can an area subjected to these tensions avoid conflict or all-out war?

Meta-Region Five

Splintered Suns and Scarlet Signs Against Tyranny

Circle Representative: Creighton Broadhurst (creighton.broadhurst@ntlworld.com)

Regions: Ahlissa (Adri), Ahlissa (Naerie), Bone March, Lordship of the Isles, Onnwal, Sea Barons, Sunndi, Dullstrand

Once the Golden Sun of Aerdy was the light of the Flanaess, a shining bastion of civilization and culture. Now that sun is splintered into a handful of successor states, struggling among themselves to reclaim some small fragment of their glorious birthright. In the heartlands of Aerdy, two Overkings vie for a debased throne, a tarnished crown, and a lost city. In the South, the states of the once-proud Iron League fight desperately to resist the insidious tendrils of the Scarlet Brotherhood and their nested conspiracies to restore another lost empire—the ancient Suel Imperium.

What is Living Greyhawk?

Living Greyhawk is the largest, most popular shared-world Dungeons & Dragons campaign in the history of gaming. Run under the auspices of the RPGA Network (RPGA), the campaign offers gamers around the world the chance to contribute to the developing history of Oerth by playing specially constructed adventures at conventions, game days, or in the comfort of home. For more information on how you can get involved in the campaign, visit **www.livinggreyhawk.com**

PALADINS OF GREYHAWK

HOLY WARRIORS OF THE FLANAESS

by Gary Holian · illustrated by Jake Parker

Why does a god, through paladinhood, invest a mortal with a sliver of his divine essence when ostensibly a cleric could serve just as well and in the case of most gods usually does? The answer is that a paladin is more than just an embodiment of the religion and its teachings. He is also a warrior for the faith and a standard bearer of the deity in a way that most clerics cannot be. He is not the hand but the fist of the deity's will.

–Excerpted from the commentaries of Herdan, Sage of Radigast City

Paladins account for some of the greatest adventurers in the Flanaess, and make some of the most interesting options for LIVING GREYHAWK players. This article and others soon to follow outline the beliefs, customs, and costumes of some of the more common paladins native to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK. Each entry below details historical and philosophical information to help you create and play a holy warrior dedicated to one of Oerth's most righteous deities. Each paladin faith includes a special feat unique to holy warriors of that order, allowing you to customize your paladin when playing in the RPGA's official LIVING GREYHAWK campaign or when playing GREYHAWK games of your own design. If you plan to use one of these feats at a sanctioned LIVING GREYHAWK event, be sure to bring along this article to show to your Dungeon Master.

A WORD ON FORMAT

Each entry starts with the name of a god followed by suggested titles for paladins of that god in parentheses below. An italic statement below the suggested titles briefly outlines the philosophy of paladins dedicated to that deity, followed by a list of the paladins' most frequent allies and enemies. Generally, lawful good paladins can be assumed to get along with others sharing their alignment, so those listed as allies represent significant bonds friendship and assistance between faiths, knightly orders, and individuals. Likewise, listed enemies include noteworthy hatreds common to all paladins of a given faith. It's reasonable to assume that every paladin regardless of deity despises fiends, undead, and evil clerics, for example, but paladins of Pelor and of St. Cuthbert might have radically different ideas about adventuring with a cleric of Pholtus.

MORE PALADINS TO COME

This article outlines five paladin faiths. More information about paladins of Heironeous, Al'Akbar, Azor'alq, Pholtus, and Allitur, as well as notes about holy warriors dedicated to Trithereon and Hextor, will follow in future installments of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Journal*, which henceforth will be found in the pages of *DUNGEON/POLYHEDRON Magazine*.

MAYAHEINE
(Valiants)

Fortitude within and Valor without

Allies: Followers of Pelor
Enemies: Iuz, Fiends

Paladins of Mayaheine are few. Theirs is a young order of scarcely a handful of years, having arisen after the recent arrival of their patroness in the Flanaess during the Greyhawk Wars. According to the doctrine of the faith, Mayaheine was once a mortal paladin of Pelor (albeit from another world or plane), a fact which drew many Pelorian paladins to her service upon her arrival on Oerth. While most of her paladins emerged from the ranks of existing Pelorian knighthoods, Mayaheine's fame grows stronger with each year. Her

Shield Maiden's Grace

You can channel energy to grant grace and spiritual calm to your companions.

Patron: Mayaheine.

Prerequisite: Divine grace, turn undead.

Benefit: Spend one of your turn undead attempts to grant a touched creature the protection of your divine grace. The creature applies your Charisma modifier at the time it was touched as a bonus to all saving throws. The Shield Maiden's grace lasts a number of rounds equal to your Charisma bonus. You can't use the Quicken Turning feat (*Defenders of the Faith*, p. 20) to speed up the use of this feat. The bonus from this ability does not stack with a paladin's divine grace.

tolerant doctrine espouses equality between men and women; as many as three in five of her holy warriors are female.

Mayaheine's faith dedicates itself to the protection of the faithful, the good, the downtrodden, and the innocent. This goal, according to their teachings, is best accomplished by honest and honorable force of arms designed to fortify the defenseless. In so doing, the paladin becomes a human bulwark against evil. The Shield Maiden's paladins tend toward more martial attitudes and pursuits than their Pelorian cousins, lacking the Sun God's focus on matters of light and darkness.

Paladins of Mayaheine typically wear flowing tabards cinched at the waist with a golden cord or girdle. Proud of their burgeoning faith, most of Mayaheine's followers wear their patron's holy symbol emblazoned on their tabards. The paladins favor light blues, greens, and tans, but as of yet have no standardized uniform. The Shield Maiden's valiants tend to prefer bladed weapons, particularly the bastard sword. They always carry shields.

A great degree of optimism surrounds the arrival of Mayaheine, an emotion shared and fiercely espoused by the example of her paladins. These holy warriors usually operate alone or in small groups composed of like-minded clerics and warriors. The religion has yet to develop significant sects or sub-societies. It doesn't sport much of a hierarchy, either, although the church maintains close ties to its origins within the Pelorian faith, which leads to great cooperation between the two religions. Mayaheine's clergy asserts that the Shield Maiden herself inhabits the Flanaess, though she has not been witnessed by anyone other than the faithful since the close of the Greyhawk wars. If she does maintain an Oerthly stronghold, it has never been found. Instead, her religion is headquartered around the Nyr Dyv, with its largest chapter and training house in Hardby. Paladins of Mayaheine strengthen the front against Iuz in Furyondy and the Shield lands, doing their best to shield the helpless from the depredations of the Dark Lord of Dorakaa.

MURLYND
(The White Paladins)

Technology is an instrument of Justice so long as the hand that wields it is True

Allies: Followers of Heironeous

Enemies: Followers of Iuz, enemies of technology

Paladins of Murlynd are the most esoteric holy warriors in all of the Flanaess. They are in fact a distinctive and exceedingly rare sect of paladins of Heironeous and not truly consecrated by Murlynd himself (for the original White Paladin still serves the Invincible One.) However, like their infamous founder, they are an order outside regular society. They share Murlynd's quirky interest in otherworldly mechanical devices and weapons as well as his devotion to using this technology to aid the struggle of the good and lawful against the forces of evil. While the White Paladins share strong connections to the faith of Heironeous and were likely once standard aspirants to his order, their nonconformity drew them to the teachings of Murlynd. Although their means are strange, they have a strong sense of honor and an unquenchable desire to see justice done and the wicked vanquished.

Paladins of Murlynd are all unique individuals and their appearance reflects this fact. Their eccentricity prevented

them from conforming to the regular code of conduct of the faith of Heironeous and they were drawn to the strange teachings of Murlynd, the White Paladin. His followers usually wear a hodge-podge of strange armor and clothing, almost all of it self-developed and constructed for purposes, only the paladin himself knows. Foreign hats, odd breastplates, or shirts of chain in combination with leather breaches or pantaloons are common. One leather glove matched with a gauntlet might be employed in some cases, along with unusual iron-shod boots and other curious items in inscrutable combinations in others. Coloration is without limitation, although they all find a way to incorporate the six-pointed star of Murlynd. Their weapons are nearly as odd as their dress and include strange crossbows and other unique ranged weapons. The more complex or technologically oriented the weapon, the more it is desired by these paladins. The most jealously guarded inventions of the White Paladins are called firebrands, remarkable (some think magical) devices that can fire small metallic balls with sufficient force to pierce flesh and penetrate hide at great distances.

Murlynd rose to prominence in the Flanaess more than two centuries ago and accorded such luminaries as Zagig Yragerne and Keoghtom as his contemporaries (their adventures are best recounted in the tome *Tales of the Company of Seven* by the mage-bard Heward). The White Paladin now shares the company of his sire, Heironeous, as well as Celestian and other deities, often traveling the planes of existence in his search for knowledge and technology that might aid his eccentric quests. Murlynd was a part of the plot (along with St. Cuthbert and the mage Zagig) that saw the demigod Iuz confined to the dungeons of Greyhawk for a time. For that effort he won the enduring enmity of the Dark Lord of Dorakaa and the White Paladin still seeks his downfall. Iuz has marked his sect for destruction. Murylnd is currently engaged in a contretemps with the fiendish St. Kargoth over a weapon known as the *Quannon*, which has drawn him away from Oerth for a time. To a lesser degree, Murlynd's holy warriors share his pursuits. They travel the Flanaess in search of knowledge and technology that will aid their battle against the forces evil. Firebrands are their greatest weapons and are highly prized.

Secret of the Firebrands

Murlynd speaks to you in dreams, whispering arcane alchemical formulae into your ears and granting you the ability to make and wield firearms.

Patron: Murlynd.

Prerequisite: Divine Grace.

Benefit: You can purchase and use the weapons (which you call "firebrands") listed on Table 6-3: Renaissance Weapons and Table 6-4: Renaissance Grenadelike Weapons on page 162 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. These weapons are not widely available, but Murlynd's faithful keep a small underground market stocked with the appropriate weaponry, which they sell only to other members of the faithful.

If you have the Craft (weaponsmith) skill, you can create these items. Pistols and muskets have a Craft DC of 20. Bullets have a Craft DC of 10. Bombs and smokebombs have a Craft DC of 15.

Gunpowder, a nonmagical substance which must be purchased or created in order for the guns or to work, has an Alchemy DC of 25. One ounce of gunpowder is needed to propel a bullet. The cost of gunpowder related to bombs and smokebombs is included in the prices listed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Gunpowder is sold in small kegs (15 pound capacity and 20 pounds total weight, 250 gp each) and in water-resistant powder horns (2-pound capacity and total weight, 35 gp each). If gunpowder gets wet, it cannot be used to fire a bullet.

This feat is not presently allowed in the Living Greyhawk campaign.

Normal: Gunpowder has not yet been discovered on Oerth.

Special: If firearms are widespread in your campaign, this feat grants a +1 bonus to attack rolls made with firearms.

PELOR
(Crusaders)

Equity for the Meek with Perseverance and Strength

Allies: Followers of Mayaheine, followers of Heironeous, followers of Zodal

Enemies: Undead, followers of Nerull

As Pelor is the god of goodness, strength, and healing, is it any wonder that the Sun God's paladins are among the most passionate and ardent in their protection and defense of the weak and innocent? Pelorian paladins tend to be altruists and selfless crusaders. They set their considerable skills against the evil and darkness that threatens their charges, the innocent subjects of Oerth. Always willing to make great sacrifices to save the helpless, Pelorian paladins are revered by the underclass of the Flanaess. The paladins consider most laws helpful, but realize that laws alone do not remove suffering from the world, and that laws sometimes can be abused to become a symptom of the problem rather than a cure. To Pelorians, the emollient light of the sun is the best balm for Oerth's ailments. Only unending perseverance and self-sacrifice can bring about true freedom and justice. Since they value goodness above all, paladins of Pelor tend to be ethically well meaning and are always morally resolute.

As paladins of Pelor can be found in nearly every nation in the Flanaess, their dress varies widely from culture to culture. Most adorn themselves in plate or chain armor and carry weapons appropriate to their needs as warriors and knights. Some few Pelorian paladins garb themselves in common dress, particularly when serving as community healers or when disguised while accomplishing goals in urban or agricultural environments. Pelorians favor light-colored tunics (especially sky blues, pale greens, or grays) when dressed informally, and always honor the Sun God with a gold orb holy symbol worn somewhere on their person, usually emblazoned on chestplates or shields. All paladins of Pelor wear a so-emblazoned inky black cloak on formal occasions or when engaging in a planned battle with the forces of darkness (such as a war). When so garbed, the Pelorians blend into the darkness, looking like floating suns charging into battle.

Pelorian paladins are eminent combatants (though never reckless) and rarely risk harm to the innocent when parley or discretion might better serve their goals. As a whole they favor no weapons over others, but individuals often focus on mastering the sword, mace, or axe over the course of their lives. The greatest among them wield legendary *sunblades* or *maces of disruption.*

Pelor's greatest enemy was the Dark God, Tharizdun, until that power was bound from the Material Plane in time immemorial. Ever since, the Lord of Light has taken on the duty of protecting mortal life from the forces of darkness and decay. "Pelor" is but the Flan name for the Sun God—the Flanaess and its rich history boast many others. Legends of the once-great Lords of Sol, a now-lost order of paladins that predates the migrations, infuse the history of the Aerdi tribes and are popular even today. The vast Solnor Ocean (literally "birthplace of the sun") takes its name in honor of Pelor, although the usage is now archaic. By the time of the Migrations, however, most glories fell to the holy warriors of Heironeous and Hextor, who largely subsumed the traditional role of the Pelorian paladin in Oeridian society. St. Benedor of the Ashen Hand, patron of the Knight Protectors of the Great Kingdom, remains a greatly revered saint in the order of the Sun Lord.

A paladin of Pelor founded the Prelacy of Almor in the years after the Battle of a Fortnight's Length, and while many religions flourished in what became a multifaith theocracy, Almor nevertheless boasted the largest plurality of Pelorian

Scalding Faith of the Sun

The power and grace of the Sun Lord has enhanced your ability to turn undead

Patron: Pelor.

Prerequisite: Divine grace, turn undead.

Benefit: You turn undead as a cleric of your class level.

Normal: A paladin turns undead as a cleric two levels lower would.

faithful in the Flanaess until the Greyhawk Wars brought that land low. As a reprieve, Pelor sent his servant Mayaheine to carry on the fight along with existing figures such as the legendary St. Bane, thought to be the greatest undead hunter in the history of the Flanaess.

Paladins of Pelor are sworn foes of the undead, whose presence their religion finds anathema to all living things. They despise Nerull and other dark gods that create such abominations. They reserve their greatest ire for vampire princes, death knights, and other malevolent lichforms, whom they hunt to destroy. Although most common in Nyrond, the Urnst States, and the Sheldomar Valley, Pelorian paladins can be found anywhere the innocent need succor and protection.

RAO
(Envoys, Heralds)

Peace through Strength of Words and Weight of Reason

Allies: Followers of St. Cuthbert

Enemies: Followers of Incabulos

Rao is the supreme deity of peace and reason. Many believe that his adherents would rather die than lift a sword in anger, preferring to outwit or outmaneuver their foes by guile or magic. The idea of a holy warrior seems foreign to the philosophy of Rao, but these are largely misunderstandings, for the god of reason knows well that peace is rarely bought cheaply. It must often be won at the point of a sword and is usually enforced through strength of arms. Therefore, in rare circumstances, paladins have been recognized and invested by the faith of Rao. Although few in number, Raoan paladins are exceedingly formidable individuals chosen for both their martial abilities and their keen wisdom and intellect. Paladins of Rao study everything they can about their opponents, learning their every vice and weakness. They are excellent negotiators and interlocutors, but if pressed they make extremely nuanced tacticians and field masters. Holy warriors of all faiths have the highest, if sometimes grudging, respect for paladins of Rao.

While the image of the "man with the swordless scabbard" pervades their legends, Raoan paladins are not masters of unarmed combat like the martial monks of some western sects. Paladins of Rao are modest individual warriors. They typically go lightly armored and often minimally armed, unless expecting the worst. Serene, patrician figures, most possess spotless manners and erudition. They favor chainmail or leather armor and light, single-handed weapons such as shortswords and maces. They rarely wear helms and almost never carry shields. Paladins of Rao typically wear grey or blue-grey tunics trimmed in white or gold and sometimes don a cowl. Rao's symbol, the white mask of serenity, is embroidered over their chests.

Rao is an old god, whose great wisdom has long been respected by the Flan tribes of eastern Oerik and later by the migrants who poured into the Flanaess following the Twin Cataclysms. While his teachings never made large inroads among the Aerdi in the Great Kingdom, his philosophy found purchase among other Oeridian settlers, particularly the Velondi of the central Flanaess. Veluna, Furyondy, and Bissel boast the greatest concentration of Raoan paladins, although distant war zones and other sites of great conflict attract wandering Raoan warriors eager to return things to a reasonable status quo. Rao's paladins maintain close ties to his church and have friendly relations with followers of St. Cuthbert. They have few sects, since their numbers are so few. The so-called Monks Attendant, who serve as escorts, guardians, and special agents for the Church of Rao in Veluna, enjoy the most widespread notoriety of any paladin subgroup. A rivalry between Raoan paladins and paladins and adherents of St. Cuthbert and Heironeous seems limited to the Knights of the Hart, where the conflict seems rooted in nationalism. Despite this, the former Plar of Veluna, Lord Alenar, himself a highly placed Paladin of Rao, was key in negotiating the treaty which would unite the kingdoms of Furyondy and Veluna. Successive setbacks have foiled this plan, including the death of Lord Alenar on a mission to Lopolla following the Greyhawk Wars, but the paladins of Rao remain its strongest proponents.

Serenity

Your wisdom, inner calm, and sagacity fuels your class abilities rather than your force of personality or will.

Patron: Rao.

Prerequisite: Divine Grace.

Benefit: Use your Wisdom bonus in place of your Charisma bonus for purposes of divine grace, lay on hands, smite evil, and turn undead.

Normal: The abilities use your Charisma bonus.

ST. CUTHBERT
(Votary, Communicant)

The Quality of a Man is not measured in his Hands or his Heart, but in his Mind

Allies: Followers of Rao

Enemies: Followers of Iuz, followers of Pholtus

Paladins of St. Cuthbert are forthright and deliberate warriors who seek to apply the common sense and truth embodied in their god's teachings while combating those who would deceive the good or injure the unenlightened. They are very nearly the classic paladin, but unlike the Heironeans, they place a greater emphasis on the practicality and wisdom of their actions and less on the honor or pride either they or society might derive from them. Paladins of St. Cuthbert consider the means as well as the ends—both must be debated and carefully weighed, lest evil gain more by precipitousness than by cautious and decisive action. Once applied to a cause, however, they are swift, valiant, and even ruthless warriors. Paladins of St. Cuthbert tend to value law and rightness more than they appreciate the value of happiness and abundance. Wealth and privilege impress them little, only forthrightness and perspicuity gain their admiration. Some find these paladins severe, even harsh.

St. Cuthbert's paladins tend to be dour, sober folk, favoring drab clothing and heavy, practical armor with no filigree. The often-repaired (seldom replaced) armor frequently shows signs of battle, including dings and dents. Many Cuthbertines wear a crumpled hat (often made of old leather) atop a suit of plate or chain and a green or russet cloak thrown over their armor. Cuthbertines tend to have long facial hair and a common man's taste for weed and fermented drinks. They wear no other particular symbols and do not to tend to offer other obvious displays of their association, but instead are well known for keen knowledge, wit, and guile. They typically wield maces, flails, staves, cudgels and other blunted weapons, but are not required to do so.

Since the time when legends record that St. Cuthbert walked Oerth as a mortal man, Cuthbertine clerics have taken it as their duty to spread the word of his practical wisdom to all men. The paladin's role, however, is not merely to preach but to actively fight enemies of the faith. Common folk, who tend to be most in need of protection, are most drawn to Cuthbert's dogma, which over the centuries has supplanted the simpler old faiths that once held sway. Paladins of St. Cuthbert are given honorary position in the order of Chapeaux of St. Cuthbert, a wandering sect dedicated to the conversion of non-believers. Due to a distant kinship, Cuthbertines are strong allies of the faith of Rao. Iuz and his followers represent the religion's greatest nemeses, as St. Cuthbert himself assisted the archmage (and later god) Zagig Yragerne imprison the Old One beneath Castle Greyhawk in 505 CY. Upon his return in 570 CY, the Lord of Pain declared a great vengeance upon St. Cuthbert and his followers, a pronouncement that redoubled the order's efforts to destroy Iuz and his minions wherever they can be found. Beyond this specific enmity, Cuthbertines also hate those that seek to spread chaos and evil, particularly wizards, demons, and religious sects that rely on ignorance and fear to achieve their goals.

Like their strong-willed god, who still walks the lands of the Flanaess on occasion, paladins of St. Cuthbert proactively assist the world. Most common in the heartlands of Flanaess, their numbers are growing particularly in Furyondy, along the front with Iuz. Faith in the Bandit Kingdoms grows stronger as well, and by some reports followers of St. Cuthbert have been making inroads even in the countryside of the former Great Kingdom. Paladins of St. Cuthbert play a crucial role in spreading the faith, and are most common in lands just beginning to understand the bare truth of the holy cudgel.

Cuthbert's Smite

You can smite chaotic creatures as well as evil ones.

Patron: St. Cuthbert.

Prerequisite: Smite evil.

Benefit: Your smite evil class ability also works against chaotic creatures. Additionally, you may use your smite ability one more time per day. If you accidentally smite a creature that is not chaotic or evil, the smite has no effect but is still used up for that day. Smite evil or chaos is a supernatural ability.

DM's Toolbox

HOW TO MAKE PLAYERS DO WHAT YOU WANT

by Penny Williams and Skip Williams

You've worked on the dungeon for weeks, and tonight is the night your players will descend into its dank depths and face the great and powerful Whozit. But wait, what's that? They want to go to the tavern? No! Your players are supposed to head for your carefully designed dungeon tonight. You appease them, improvising some small talk with the tavern owner, sure that they'll quickly get bored and head to the dungeon. Now, however, they decide that they want to look for the tavern owner's lost dog Snookums. Uh-oh. You only threw that out to make conversation while the PCs diverted themselves at the tavern, but now they're heading in a direction you've not planned for at all. Usually a proponent of player choice, you're starting to rethink that opinion. *Perhaps railroading your players has some benefit after all,* you think to yourself.

If you've ever felt like that, rest assured that player choice is the DM's very best weapon. If you browbeat the players into going after the great and powerful Whozit, and they get the snot beaten out of them, who will they blame? You! And deservedly so. After all, you "forced" them to go where they didn't want to. But what if you present the options in a manner that makes the dungeon seem like the best choice? This way, if your players choose to go there, it's their choice. As long as you've created well-balanced scenarios and encounters of an appropriate challenge level, you can't be blamed for the outcome.

When you're the DM, you have the advantage of knowing what's really going on, both in a particular scenario and in your world. You're in charge of the information flow. No matter how much your players know, they don't know as much as you do. Thus, if you're clever, you can manipulate players into making the choices you want—or at least offer them the opportunity to get into piles of trouble of their own making. If you provide at least the illusion of a choice, you can make player choice work for you instead of against you. This does not mean that we advocate forcing your players to do anything they don't want to do, which can build resentment and frustration, possibly resulting in the break-up of your game group. Used judiciously, however, subtle manipulation can be a helpful DM's tool in a few particular situations.

WHEN TO MANIPULATE

A little DM manipulation goes a long way, so choose your moments carefully. Use this tool too often and your players are likely to catch on and become distrustful. Although it might get you the result you desire, resist the temptation to manipulate your players all the time. Remember, this tool should only be used on a few rare occasions.

There are three circumstances when some DM manipulation is both effective and appropriate: setting an adventure hook, upping the ante in an encounter, and creating a danger multiplier.

Setting an Adventure Hook

If your players are determined to head in a direction you haven't planned, such as rescuing Snookums instead of heading for Whozit's dungeon, and you don't feel confident that you can make up enough material on the fly, some slight manipulation can help you get your players back on track. Use some of the manipulation techniques given below to make getting into the adventure easier than avoiding it.

Upping the Ante in an Encounter

When you up the ante, you make an encounter seem easier than it really is. Only after the PCs are committed do they realize exactly what they're facing. The Reinforcements option (see below) is a good trick to use when you want to up the ante, and the Big Con technique can also prove very useful.

When you up the ante, be prepared for at least two possible outcomes—the characters defeat the augmented encounter, or they lose. Be sure you know where you're going to take the story in each case, and never take the outcome for granted either way.

Borders Illustrated by David Wahlstrom

Creating a Danger Multiplier

This option might also be called "getting the players to do something stupid." Without doubt, adding a danger multiplier can be the most fun for the DM, particularly for a DM who likes to put one over on the players from time to time. The possibilities are endless. Can you get your players to jump into a monster's lair and land prone at its feet? Jump into a pool of acid? Expose themselves to the plague? Accept the kiss of a succubus? Absolutely. Just make it look like the easiest way out of a dangerous situation or the fastest way to the treasure. Almost any of the techniques described below can be used successfully for this purpose, but the Easy Way Out technique is an especially good choice.

VARIETIES OF DM MANIPULATION

There are as many ways to manipulate players as there are successful DMs. It's not possible to cover every technique, but several of the most common and successful methods are summarized below, with brief examples of how they work in play. These examples are taken from existing campaigns, and some are from tournaments written for the RPGA, which have already had their run.

To accomplish a successful manipulation, you must create an illusion. The illusion is the players' perception of the situation. This perception can be the result of one or more actual spells from the Illusion school of magic, but most often it is merely a set of circumstances that has the potential for misinterpretation.

When setting up such an illusion, be careful not to make it too solid. The truth should be relatively easy to discover if the characters act prudently. It might be tempting to make your illusion foolproof, but you should resist the urge. A thinner illusion is much more fair to the players. If it's reasonably easy to poke holes in the illusion and the players don't do so, it's their own fault for getting taken in. If, on the other hand, the truth is hidden beneath so many layers of subterfuge that no reasonable single effort could uncover it, the situation isn't appropriate for simple DM manipulation during a game session. It might, however, be appropriate for the climax of a long-term mission during which clues can be gathered and assembled over time. Don't worry that your players won't be taken in by a thin illusion. Experience indicates that players still fall for thin illusions, as long as they are well thought out.

Below are several categories of illusions that can be used to make players do what you want them to. You can use any of the options together or separately, depending on what you'd like your players to do.

In Media Res

This technique involves throwing the characters into the middle of a situation that is unfolding around them. It's best used as an opening gambit for an evening's play, although it can be used at any time. In Media Res is a great way to get players involved in a situation that they haven't thoroughly investigated, and it forces them to act before they've done much thinking. Often, details that might have revealed the true situation go unnoticed and key questions go unasked because the players' attentions are focused on the immediate action.

How It's Done: To use this technique, start with an event or situation that is unfolding in the characters' location right now. For example, a runaway carriage, a bungled arrest of a criminal by the town guards, or someone screaming for help in a darkened alleyway as the characters pass by. Then, as the action winds down, tie the event to what you want the players to do. Since they're already involved, they're likely to pursue clues.

Why It Works: Players don't come to the table to do nothing while events unfold around them. They have a natural desire to get into the action. It's a rare player who can bypass an interesting incident without becoming involved. This technique can also make your campaign more popular with players who like action. They often appreciate the chance to delve into the action immediately, rather than wasting time dithering about what to do at the tavern before every mission.

Example: A wagonload of fireworks collides with a wagonload of incendiaries, which touch off the fireworks. People scream and run for cover from the flying debris, but a few are injured. Several nearby roofs are ignited by the fireworks, causing more panic among the crowd. The characters can attempt to aid the injured, put out the fires, or find a way to douse the fireworks display.

The Easy Way Out

The Easy Way Out takes a situation in which the characters are suddenly imperiled and offers an apparent way out. This technique is best used after a short lull in the action or when the group's healers are unusually low on spells and healing items. It is useful for putting characters at a disadvantage against an enemy or simply dealing some additional damage at a crucial time. Like the In Media Res technique, the Easy Way Out induces the players to act quickly without investigating a situation that in other circumstances might well rouse their suspicions.

How It's Done: To use this technique, lead off with an immediate and seemingly significant danger, such as a water-filled room trap or a charging monster. Describe the situation, including a matter-of-fact mention of an apparent way out. Taking the easy way out, of course, should land the players in even more trouble than they would have encountered from the original danger.

Why It Works: Adrenaline doesn't prevent thinking, but it can greatly discourage it. When players have their attention focused on avoiding a particular danger, they often don't stop to examine what seems to be an easy out, even if they might actually have the time to do so.

Example: A mated pair of white dragons, neither of which is a match for the PCs under normal circumstances, maintains a lair within an arctic mountain. When the male spots the characters nearing the back entrance of the lair (a convenient hole in the ground), he takes flight, using magic to make himself appear larger. He makes a strafing run against the PCs as they labor up the mountain, giving them a bit of time to see him approaching. The DM's description of the area includes a mention of the hole in the ground, noting especially its size, which should be obviously too small for the approaching dragon. The DM should also make mention of a few hiding places that seem less effective, such as some boulders. Faced with a battle on a mountainside against a dragon large enough to be a significant threat, most PCs will immediately dive into the hole to avoid him. Of course, the female dragon waits at the bottom of the hole, jaws open and ready for a snack. The male then dives down the hole behind the PCs to trap them between himself and his mate.

Curiosity Killed the PC

Anything that seems out of the ordinary attracts interest, especially from smart players. This tactic can be used at any point throughout a game session, but it's an especially good way to get players to accept an adventure hook. Although players might be inclined to do more investigation when presented with an anomaly than they would when reacting on a visceral level to danger, they tend to be so caught up in the story behind the unusual situation that they won't abandon the trail, even if it becomes dangerous.

How It's Done: To use this technique, present the characters with a situation that is obviously unusual for your campaign. The situation need not appear dangerous or even particularly important, but it must involve a sight or event that makes the players do a double take. For example, you might use a town full of people walking around with clubs studded with silver pieces (they're afraid of lycanthropes), a lever in a dungeon wall bearing a sign that says, "Broken Trap," or a pair of orcs walking down a dungeon corridor discussing how no one can see them (a wizard told them he'd made them invisible).

Why It Works: Players like mystery. There's nothing that gets a player as involved with a storyline as the chance to get to the bottom of a situation she doesn't understand. Even if the situation is obviously dangerous, the typical player is always tempted to take the bait.

Example: As the PCs walk down a dungeon corridor that is obviously the sole entrance to a larger complex, they hear a commotion ahead. A collection of nasty monsters that would normally present some challenge to the PCs runs toward them, shouting "Run away! It's coming!" in their various languages. Those creatures that would normally be armed and armored have the requisite equipment, but none have drawn their weapons. Most PCs will likely allow the monsters to pass, often without even taking attacks of opportunity, training their attention on what lies beyond. In fact, another set of monsters (or one big one) is ahead, and the monsters that ran past the PCs did so strictly to get behind the PCs and cut off their escape, effectively sandwiching then between two sets of monsters in the upcoming battle.

The Big Con

Of all the options for manipulation, the Big Con is arguably the most fun for a DM to plan. To pull it off, you need an outrageous lie, usually on the part of an NPC. At its best, the lie is so extreme that no one should believe it. But the liar has built just enough support for the story that it seems plausible on the surface. This support often requires the cooperation of one or more additional NPCs, who might or might not appear to be connected with the main liar when the tale is told. This tactic can be used to set up a whole adventure in which the unstated goal is to reveal the lie and set things right. Alternatively, it can be used to relieve the PCs of some excess cash by a time-honored method known as "fleecing." (Warning: If you use the Big Con for this purpose, you can count on the PCs obsessively hunting down the perpetrator for years to come.)

How It's Done: First, select a situation that could be viewed in more than one way with the help of a fictitious tale or an illusion. Then develop one or more NPCs or monsters that are capable of making the situation work to their advantage. For example, you could use the time-honored bait-and-switch technique of having an NPC ask a PC to deliver a "valuable item" and using the Bluff and Pick Pocket skills to switch the worthless copy with a valuable item of the PC's.

Why It Works: Players fall for the Big Con for the same reasons they snap up adventure hooks—greed, altruism, personal interest, desire to avoid danger, and so on. An NPC with a con in mind can play on any one or more of these motivations. Players rarely think to check out stories that are backed up by at least one other NPC, regardless of whether or not they know the NPC in question.

Example: A succubus is charged with retrieving an item that the PCs seek. To that end, she disguises herself as an adventurer and puts herself in the path of the PCs when they stop for a rest. In her adventurer's guise, she appears to have talents or equipment they need for their mission. At first she declines to join them, but she later relents under pressure. The next morning, she complains of feeling weak (as indeed all the characters do, since she has level-drained them overnight). Examination shows that she and the other party members all have bite marks on their necks, as though they have been bitten by a vampire! (She has, of course, taken care to draw the marks on everyone's neck, including her own.) She continues the subterfuge for several nights, progressively weakening

the party, until they reach the location of the desired item. Since she is at full strength and they are not, she easily absconds with the item.

Reinforcements

This technique draws the PCs into a situation that seems easy to handle, but then introduces additional challenges to toughen the encounter. The Reinforcements tactic works well in combination with other techniques, such as the Big Con or the Easy Way Out. The players are offered a challenge that seems well within their capability, perhaps even easy. Most don't bother to conduct an investigation, which would reveal that other dangers might also exist.

How It's Done: To use this technique, present the PCs with an adventure hook that seems relatively uncomplicated. To tempt the PCs, make mention of the treasure they'll earn or the advancement of their agenda that success would bring. If any of the players note that the situation seems too simple, make a vague remark such as, "Well, maybe he's had trouble getting help, what with the plague last year and all."

Why It Works: Almost no draw works as well as "something for nothing." Even smart players aren't immune, and they usually fail to investigate because they'd like to believe it's true.

Example: The PCs know that a vampire has been preying on the countryside and that he makes his home in an abandoned temple in the wilderness. The vampire's coffin is easy to find, but upon opening it, stakes in hand, they discover that the occupant has a wife (also a vampire) who shares his cozy bed. Two vampires for the price of one! You might also consider stocking the room with a few other undead minions, which the vampires might keep on hand for just such a situation.

PUBLISHED ADVENTURES

One of the easiest ways to prepare for a month's worth of gaming is to pick a module that fits your tastes, shape the names and places to fit your campaign world, and jump into the action. Such preparation not only takes less time than writing adventures from scratch, it usually yields three or four good ways to bring the characters into the adventure.

These suggested hooks might not be sufficient to manipulate your players with enough subtlety to ensure that they don't *feel* like they're being manipulated, but they give you a great start on solving the problem of making the players do what you want. Spotting a good hook is really a matter of knowing your players and your campaign world, but hooks that appeal strongly to one character's values will give the adventure an advocate within the adventuring group, and hooks that involve NPCs that the characters already know are more likely to succeed.

Even if running published modules isn't to your taste, reading adventures designed by other DMs is one of the best ways to keep your own ideas fresh, especially when it comes to keeping the players on your carefully prepared storyline. The adventure hooks can easily be adapted to other scenarios, even those you create yourself.

UNFAIR TACTICS

Like any other game, DM manipulation does have rules. Never lie to your players, unless you are speaking as an NPC who is lying for a reason. (In this case, you aren't lying to your players; the NPC is.) The information you present must be factual to the extent that its source is reliable.

You must establish a baseline of normalcy for your campaign. Your players need to know what's normal in order to detect what's not normal. Run at least a few standard adventures before attempting one with a twist like those described above.

Don't manipulate the characters into a situation in which they are clearly outmatched and have no chance of success. Whether or not you trick the players into taking a certain piece of bait, there must really be something in it for them. While it's fine to scale up experience point awards and treasure based on circumstances that might make an encounter more dangerous than usual, don't overcompensate by over-rewarding players just because you've used a bit of subterfuge on them. Be sure that the rewards are actually commensurate with the risks, as usual.

THE REWARD

Manipulating your players might be sneaky and underhanded, but it can also provide a lot of fun for both you and the players. That's right, the players might find that they enjoy adventures that begin with or include some misconceptions on their part, as long as the manipulations were fair and the rewards were reasonable.

But won't pulling the wool over your players' eyes cause them to dislike your campaign? Usually not. As long as you do it with fairness and impartiality, using some DM manipulation to get PCs into sticky situations won't cause your players to quit the game. On the contrary, they might like it better than a more "straightforward" campaign. Most players find the game more enjoyable if they have good, in-character hints about what you've got planned. That's right, if you plan your manipulation carefully, your players will actually enjoy the campaign more. The trick, of course, is to use these techniques sparingly, allowing your players to control the flow and pace of the campaign until a problem (like a stalled or indecisive group) crops up.

Even the most heavy-handed techniques can help you keep your players going in the right direction, as long as such incidents are few and far between. In fact, such situations might be the stuff of tomorrow's campaign legends!

Dungeoncraft

FANTASY CITIES III
CITY ADVENTURES

by Monte Cook

Part 1 of this series presented an overview of how to use cities in a D&D game. Part 2 demonstrated how to go about building a city and fleshing it out for campaign use. This third and final installment of the series assumes that you've got a city ready to go, and all you need is something for the PCs to do there.

PCs visit cities for a variety of reasons. Perhaps they just want some healing and rest after an ordeal, or maybe they need to find out some information. They might merely plan to visit an old acquaintance or look for work. In most cases, they don't come in search of an actual adventure. Of course, that's no reason not to spring one on them anyway.

CITY SETTINGS

Even in the heart of a bustling city, no adventurer can feel completely safe. Danger dwells in every dark alley, and brawls can erupt in any tavern. Even in the better parts of town, powerful individuals sit in their elegant, well-lit towers weaving intricate and deadly plots. And that's only what goes on above the streets—whole communities full of strange creatures could lurk underneath the city.

One of the best things about setting an adventure in a city (or a community of any size) is that it allows you to create a scenario that requires lots of interaction with NPCs. During the course of the scenario, the PCs might have to speak with everyone from the local duke to the lowliest beggar on the mean streets. Such adventures can even feature background NPCs with whom the party is already acquainted, such as Thulen the barkeep or Jessa the blacksmith.

A city adventure can be a refreshing change of pace for players who have grown tired of dungeon and wilderness treks. Dealing with the city guard or protecting a drunken fool who knows too much for his own good is a much different task than bearding a wyvern in its lair or exploring an ancient ruin.

Still, if your players crave a dungeon, your city can potentially offer that too. A catacomb, a sewer, or just a mysterious tunnel or cave complex beneath the city streets can provide a dungeonlike setting in which all manner of underground denizens might feel at home. But even if the monsters are similar, exploring a dungeon underneath a city is a much different experience than exploring one in the middle of the wilderness. With help and healing just above, the PCs might feel that they can take on more and greater challenges. On the other hand, awakening a sleeping dragon, stirring up a plague-ridden nest of dire rats, or opening a portal to Hell has far different consequences when there is a city full of people above than it does out in the desolate wilderness.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

City adventures often focus heavily on plot and story. Just the sheer number of intelligent creatures in a city, each with its own agenda, makes for endless plot options. A city mission can involve sneaking into a secured place, protecting innocents from harm, or even solving a mystery. In particular, possibilities abound for mystery scenarios in a city because someone's always up to no good. The PCs might have to discover who murdered an important ambassador, trace a missing mithral shipment, or even find out why umber hulks keep crawling up out of the sewer every night. You can also use loose ends left over from a previous adventure to build a new one. For example, perhaps Undrake the sorcerer took exception to the PCs infiltrating his castle and destroying the evil artifact he was building last month. Having tracked them to the city, he has now sent his agents to attack the characters while they rest at the inn.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

A city adventure can begin like any other scenario—with a whispered agreement made in a darkened tavern or an attempted theft in the dead of night. However, a city can offer some unique opening opportunities as well.

Borders Illustrated by David Wahlstrom

Using Enemies

If the PCs have enemies (and how could they not?), assassins posing as merchants might lure them into a "shop" that's little more than a front for a diabolical trap. Alternatively, someone might frame the PCs for a crime, making them fugitives from the law. In a scenario like this, the PCs must not only elude the guards but also prove their innocence—possibly by catching the real perpetrators.

Using Friends

Friends of the PCs who live in town can also provide a starting point for adventures. For example, the characters' old friend Terrin, a dwarf merchant, might ask them to provide some extra security for his daughter's wedding in the dwarven quarter because he's certain that his mischievous brother is planning to ruin the event. Or perhaps Valacor, the cleric who always heals the PCs after their adventures, complains to them that an organized crime syndicate is extorting money from his temple. Or maybe Thulen the barkeep slips a note under the door of the characters' room at the inn, warning them that an evil cult is after the mysterious magic staff they found recently.

Using Employment

Of course, employment opportunities can also provide good starting points for adventures. The PCs might ask for jobs from merchants or temples, or NPCs seeking hired help can contact them through various means. A fantasy city might have a spot for public posting of jobs, where the PCs can find out about opportunities. Perhaps someone has posted a bounty on wererats, or an NPC is offering a treasure map for sale, or the like.

Letting the PCs Choose

One of the best reasons to start an adventure in a city is that the PCs can usually choose from multiple adventure hooks—or even invent their own scenario. Such "self-starting" adventures tend to be more satisfying for the players, since they've chosen their path instead of allowing themselves to be channeled into yet another premade plotline. The PCs might decide to start their own shipping business, delivering goods through dangerous territory. Alternatively, they might elect to hunt down a dangerous escaped criminal they've heard about, or seek vengeance against an NPC who has wronged them. They might try to buy homes of their own or open a shop to sell the loot they have uncovered in a dungeon.

This type of adventure presents more work for you as DM, since it can't be entirely planned out ahead of time, but it also provides plenty of ideas that you can use to create personalized encounters for the party. If your players are interested in making goals of their own, you can let them pursue their interests while introducing a few surprises and challenges. For example, PCs who want to start a guild could discover that some NPCs are interested but others are bitterly opposed. Such a situation could lead to sabotage, political maneuvering, and even direct attacks on the characters and their friends. Should the conflict escalate enough, the matter might even draw the attention of the secret power brokers who control much of the city's commerce from the shadows, leading to even more intrigue.

RUNNING A CITY ADVENTURE

Make no mistake: Running city adventures is challenging. While a dungeon adventure can be handled with a map and a key that describes the contents of each room, a city adventure is more complex. The PCs have far more options to choose from than whether to go left or right down a corridor.

For example, suppose the PCs learn that a fire raged through the mercantile district late last night. If they are interested in finding out how the fire started, several obvious courses of action are open to them. They could begin by investigating the scene, interrogating witnesses, talking to the city guards and other officials, using divination spells, or just gathering information about the area and the people who live there. There might even be other possibilities that you haven't even thought of—but your players will.

Charting the Options

One way to cope with so many options is to create a flowchart showing the possible courses of action and where each might lead. Write down all the possibilities you can think of on a sheet of paper. Then draw a line from each of these options to the next likely step.

For example, if the PCs use a divination spell, they discover that the fire was started by magical means.

NONVIOLENT ADVENTURES

In a city, you have the opportunity to run occasional adventures that involve little or no combat. For example, discovering how a fire started in the city does not have to involve any fighting at all. The characters might be able to solve the mystery just by talking with witnesses, investigating the scene, and casting lots of divination spells. Catching the culprit might require a harrowing chase through the city streets, and the PCs might even have to take some action to prevent him from starting another fire, but even exciting scenes like these don't have to involve actual battles.

Of course, city adventures need not be entirely devoid of combat either. Cities are full of powerful fighters, wizards, clerics, and rogues who might directly or indirectly oppose the party. And such foes often have scores of thugs, hired assassins, and other minions to do their dirty work. In fact, most of the opponents PCs face in a city will probably be classed NPCs of the standard races, as described in the *Player's Handbook*. For obvious reasons, actual monsters are rare, so their presence typically requires a good explanation, such as a *summon monster* spell.

MYSTERIES AND DIVINATIONS

Many spells, such as *detect thoughts*, *divination*, *commune*, and even *detect evil*, can present real problems when used in a mystery-style adventure. Why bother with a "police-procedural" style of investigation when you can just use magic to find out whether your suspect is guilty?

The best solution is not to prohibit the use of such spells, but to prepare for them. After all, the NPCs involved in the crime are accustomed to living in a world where Divination spells exist, and taking steps to prevent such magic from ruining their plans should be second nature for them. For example, while *detect evil* might make finding a murderer easier, it doesn't reveal who paid him to commit the crime. *Detect thoughts* might help uncover that information, but not if the mastermind never revealed her identity in the first place. There are also plenty of magical ways to block divinations, such as *nondetection* and similar effects.

In addition, you can design the adventure to account for the use of divinations by requiring the PCs to get more information than such spells can provide. Perhaps the real mystery is not the identity of the thief who stole a religious relic, but where the item is now, after two or three sales to different parties. Furthermore, the church officials want to learn how the thief broke into the temple so they can prevent such thefts in the future. Thus, the mystery doesn't have to end with *detect evil*, or even *commune*.

This bit of knowledge should lead them to ask around at the nearby wizards' guild about arcane spellcasters who might be capable of producing such an effect. Thus, you can draw a line on your flowchart from "divination spells" to "asking at wizards' guild."

Alternatively, if the PCs decide to interrogate witnesses, they learn that someone heard strange words right before the fire. If they're clever, they might deduce that those words were the verbal component of a spell, and that theory might also lead them to ask questions at the wizards' guild. Thus, you also need a line on your flowchart from "interrogating witnesses" to "asking at wizards' guild."

By the time you finish, your flowchart might be a maze of lines drawn from one event to another, but no one has to understand these notes except you. The important thing is to make some logical predictions about where the PCs might want to go during the adventure so that you can prepare for their actions. Such a system won't entirely prevent the players from catching you off-guard, but it should minimize the number of times that happens.

Creating a Timeline

Another good method for managing a city adventure is to make a timeline of events. Simply consider what the perpetrators' plans are and decide what they'll do (and when they'll do it) if no one interferes. You can use this technique to chart events resulting from the actions of several groups or individuals that might be involved, such as the city guards, a rival seeking the same goal, and so forth.

Going back to the example of the fire, you might decide that on the first day after the conflagration, NPC investigators determine that it was caused by a magical explosion, but a guard who helped to put out the fire is found dead. Two nights after the fire, there is another blaze in a different part of town. The day after that, a ropemaker who saw the first sorcerous arson comes forward to tell the authorities what she knows.

All these events occur as noted at the specified times unless the PCs do something to change them. If they discover the use of magic before the authorities do, the guards pursue other avenues of investigation—unless they don't realize that someone has "scooped" them. If they talk to the guard who helped extinguish the blaze right away, the arsonist doesn't bother to kill him—he's too late to stop the fellow from revealing whatever he knows. If the ropemaker knows the PCs are investigating, she might talk to them instead of the authorities.

There might, however, be some events that the PCs cannot affect. For example, perhaps an NPC wizard shows up one day after the fire claiming to be hot on the trail of the arsonist, regardless of what the PCs have already done. He might be an ally for the PCs or a rival—or perhaps he has his own agenda. Only you know for sure, but his presence is another mystery for the PCs to solve. Such an event should be included when you want to introduce a new plot point that doesn't depend on the PCs' actions. Scheduling it, however, becomes much easier if you already have a pre-established timeline for the rest of the events.

PCs IN THE CITY

As is true for any other kind of setting, certain characters do better in an urban environment than others. Bards, for example, almost always shine in the city. Not only are most of their class skills geared toward influencing and interacting with people, but a number of their class features and spells likewise stress social situations. Bards can charm, entertain, and access information that no one else can. Rogues likewise have lots of skills that can be put to good use in a city.

Clerics also do very well in city adventures. Not only do they have spells and skills that help them deal with others, but they also tend to hold positions of special importance (officially or unofficially) in the eyes of the common folk. The same might be said of a paladin for similar reasons. Fighters, monks, sorcerers, and wizards have abilities that are useful pretty much everywhere, so they present no special problems in a city environment.

On the other hand, druids, rangers, and barbarians are not at their best in urban environments because their skills and abilities are geared toward nonsocial functions. So how do you make sure that they too have a chance to shine in a city adventure? One great way to even things

out is to by providing opportunities for the use of wilderness skills. For example, the estate that the PCs must sneak into could be surrounded by a lavish garden, in which the druid's *entangle* spell might help to detain pursuers. The head of the enemy thieves' guild might have a pack of trained dogs on which the ranger could use his Animal Empathy skill. Taking pains to ensure that everyone can make a contribution leads to satisfied players.

NPCS IN THE CITY

When designing a wilderness adventure, you have to stat out that tribe of gnolls, give it a place to live, and decide what its leaders are up to. When you put together a dungeon, you have to decide where to place that gray ooze and make sure that it has a logical way to survive between PC snacks. But such issues pale compared with plotting out a city adventure in which you have to invent, organize, and roleplay dozens—or even hundreds—of NPCs. These characters, the people of the community, should be as interesting and detailed as possible, and above all, they should remain consistent.

The best solution, of course, is to spend time prior to the game session preparing the NPCs you know the characters are going to encounter. Don't worry about combat statistics unless you have to; they're probably not going to fight everyone they meet. Instead, make notes about who knows what and who likes (or hates) whom. People are complicated creatures, and each one has knowledge, motives, allegiances, enemies, and so on. You need a way to remember how the various important NPCs are related, as well as how they feel about each other and the situation at hand.

In the example of the mysterious fire (see Running a City Adventure, above), those whose friends, businesses, or persons were harmed by the fire should all have opinions about the incident, most of which are colored by their own emotions. One might harbor a special hatred for a merchant across town and sincerely believe that he is the culprit. Another NPC who hates the same rival merchant might also accuse him of the crime in the hope of ruining his business, even though she doesn't actually believe he's guilty. Meanwhile, a city guard captain who is secretly in the pocket of a merchant prince from a rival city might try to ensure that the culprit remains free to start more fires. (Of course, if people start to get hurt in the fires, his conscience might eventually get the better of him.) And in the middle of it all, literally, is a rope maker who saw the real arsonist run off. She can provide some real clues if approached, but she wants to know what's in it for her if she provides help.

But unless the community is so small that you can actually detail every single inhabitant ahead of time, you'll invariably have to come up with some NPCs on the fly. For example, to solve the arson mystery, the PCs will probably need to question the ropemaker at some point. You prepare for that encounter by giving her a name, detailing the information she can provide, and making a few notes about how she answers the PCs' questions. But when the encounter occurs, something she says sparks an idea in a player's mind that you never considered—she might be *charmed*. That PC then wants to talk to her husband to see whether she's been acting at all strangely. Now you have to come up with some details of the husband—a character you never gave a second thought to.

Fortunately, most spontaneously created NPCs won't be foes of the characters, so you probably won't need statistics such as hit points or attack bonuses. But you probably do need a Bluff or a Diplomacy modifier, and possibly some other skill modifiers as well. To come up with a skill modifier on the fly, first decide the NPC's class and level. This task shouldn't be too challenging for a typical shopkeeper; just choose an appropriate and realistic combination. (Most people in town are probably 1st- or 2nd-level commoners.) Then add the appropriate ability modifier to the NPC's class level (for a class skill) or to one-quarter of his class level (for a cross-class skill). These figures assume that the NPC has acquired some ranks in the skill but not the maximum allowed—a fair assumption in most cases. Alternatively, you can just use the ability modifier alone if the NPC would not logically have purchased any ranks in the skill.

You also need a name, and you need one quickly. Preparation helps here if creative naming isn't your forte. Make up a list of names appropriate for your campaign well ahead of time and keep it handy whenever you run a session. You might even want to create a number of such lists—one for each race, sorted by gender. Then, whenever the party encounters a new NPC, you'll always have a name ready.

To breathe some life into a spur-of-the-moment NPC, give her an interesting quirk that the players are likely to remember. Such a tactic often makes the players think you gave this character a lot of thought (even if you didn't). Refer to page 150 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for a quick list of traits and distinguishing characteristics that you can give an on-the-fly NPC. You can generate one randomly, or just choose one that you like. One such characteristic is plenty to make the character memorable

Remember that interacting with NPCs tends to be more important in a city adventure than in any other kind of scenario, so don't rush through the in-game conversations. A particular NPC might have no relevant information to offer, but the players don't know that, and you shouldn't reveal it by your attitude. If you were running a dungeon, you'd take care not to say or do anything that would help the players figure out which doors were trapped. In the same way, you don't want to telegraph to them which NPCs are important in a mystery adventure. If they're having fun figuring out who knows what, who's lying, and which clue is a red herring, don't spoil it for them.

Sage Advice

MAGIC AND COMBAT OFFICAL ANSWERS

by Skip Williams

This month the sage continues looking at the ins and outs of magic and combat in the D&D game.

Under the description for the bard's inspire courage ability, it says that the bard can affect allies. Does this mean he can't affect himself with this ability? What about the other bardic music abilities whose descriptions say they affect allies but make no mention of the bard himself? Also, which bardic music abilities are spell-like and which are supernatural? (Some are labeled, but not all of them are.)

The details are as follows:

Inspire Courage (Su): Affects allies and the bard.

Countersong (Su): Affects all creatures within 30 feet of the bard, including the bard himself.

***Fascinate* (Sp):** Affects a single creature other than the bard.

Inspire Competence (Su): Affects an ally but not the bard.

***Suggestion* (Sp):** Affects a single creature but not the bard.

Inspire Greatness (Su): Affects allies and the bard.

The short description of the *harmonize* spell on page 88 of *Song and Silence* says the spell pools the talents of multiple bards to grant one of them extra temporary ranks of Perform. When you read the full description of the spell on page 92, however, it says the spell grants the lead performer a circumstance bonus on Perform checks equal to +1 per three bard levels of the backup performers. Which is correct?

The spell description is correct.

The *healthful slumber* spell from *Song and Silence* doubles the subject's natural healing rate. The Heal skill allows for long-term care that also doubles the recipient's natural healing rate. Does a character who receives both long-term care and a *healthful slumber* spell heal at four times the normal rate?

As has been pointed out several times before in this column (most recently in issue #303), you don't multiply multipliers—you combine them into a single multiplier instead. Each extra multiple adds +1 to the original multiplier, so two doublings triple the original (see page 275 in the *Player's Handbook*). In the case of *healthful slumber* plus successful long term care, a subject regains 3 hit points per level per day of light activity, or 4.5 hit points per level per day of complete bed rest.

Suppose a PC has been petrified, and the party cleric is about to cast a *break enchantment* spell to bring him back. Can the cleric first cast an *endurance* spell to boost the petrified character's Constitution score so that he won't fail the required Fortitude save to avoid death? Can he be considered an ally (for the purposes of spells or effects that help allies) even when in stone form? Is he even considered a creature as far as the *endurance* spell is concerned?

First, when you restore a petrified creature with *break enchantment,* no Fortitude save is required. The *stone to flesh* spell requires the subject to make a Fortitude save (DC 15) to survive the process, but *break enchantment* does not.

A petrified creature is mindless and without senses, but it is still a creature. For all intents and purposes, a petrified creature is an immobile construct, and magical effects applied to it function as they would if used on any other construct. Since a construct has no Constitution score, it cannot benefit from an *endurance* spell or from any other effect that increases Constitution. When a petrified creature receives a *stone to flesh* spell, it uses its normal Constitution score for the required Fortitude save. In the case of a *stone to flesh* spell, the recipient first turns back to flesh (and regains its normal creature type complete with Constitution score), then makes the Fortitude save.

Borders Illustrated by David Wahlstrom

Will a *wind wall* spell affect a sling bullet or sling stone?

Yes, a sling bullet or stone has a 30% miss chance (just like any other normal ranged weapon does) if it passes through the wall.

The description of the *bless weapon* spell reads, in part: "The weapon negates the damage reduction of evil creatures and is capable of striking evil incorporeal creatures as if it had a +1 enhancement bonus." Does that mean: (The weapon negates damage reduction) and (strikes evil incorporeals as if +1)? Or does it mean: (The weapon negates damage reduction and strikes evil incorporeals) as if +1? That is, does the "as if it had a +1 enhancement bonus" phrase apply to the entire sentence or only to the second clause? Does a weapon that receives this spell actually gain a +1 enhancement bonus?

The phrase in question applies to the entire sentence. (To be grammatically precise, it applies to the sentence's entire compound predicate.) The weapon gains no enhancement bonus; it just functions as though it had one when used against an evil creature with damage reduction or an incorporeal evil creature.

Perhaps the sentence would be clearer to you if it read: The weapon functions as through it had a +1 enchantment bonus when it strikes an evil creature with damage reduction or when it strikes an evil, incorporeal creature.

If a barbarian character is normally capable of using a wand (perhaps because he has a level of cleric or some other ability that allows the use of such items), can he still do so while he is raging?

A character using the barbarian's rage ability cannot activate a wand. If a class has a rage ability that does not allow spellcasting (as with barbarian rage), a character of that class also cannot use a magic item activated by spell trigger, spell completion, or command word while using the rage ability. It is possible, of course, that a class could have a rage ability that does allow spellcasting. If so, members of that class could also activate magic items by spell trigger, spell completion, or command word while raging.

When do you apply the automatic metamagic feats in the *Epic Level Handbook* (Quicken Spell, Silent Spell, and Still Spell)? Do you have to apply them when the spells are prepared, or can you wait until they are about to be cast? For example, suppose I'm a wizard with Automatic Quicken Spell. If I prepare two *magic missile* spells, are both of them quickened? This distinction could be important because a character is still allowed only one quickened spell per round, right?

When you have one of the automatic metamagic feats, you acquire your daily spells normally. You also cast them normally, but any spell of the appropriate level can have the feat applied (or not applied) upon casting, as you desire. For example, if you have taken Automatic Quicken Spell once, any 3rd-level or lower spell you cast can be quickened, provided that it doesn't have a normal casting time of more than 1 full round. However, you are not obligated to cast all of your qualifying spells as quickened spells. For example, you could cast a quickened *magic missile* and a regular *magic missile* during your turn, provided that you had two *magic missile* spells available to cast. Both would take up their normal 1st-level spell slots.

Do the temporary Constitution increases that a shambling mound receives when hit with electrical attacks stack? Does this Constitution increase constitute an inherent bonus? (In other words, is a shambling mound limited to a +5 temporary Constitution increase, no matter how many electrical attacks strike it?) What effect does the Constitution increase have?

The temporary Constitution increase a shambling mound gets from electrical attacks is not an inherent bonus—the creature's Constitution score just gets bigger. (If the increase was an inherent bonus, then the creature description would use those words to describe it.) The *Monster Manual* sets no limit on the amount of temporary Constitution increase a shambling mound can have at a time.

Any change to any creature's Constitution score is retroactive; when its Constitution goes up, its hit points, Fortitude saves, and all other attributes dependent on Constitution go up accordingly. When the creature's Constitution drops (temporary Constitution from electrical attacks lasts only an hour), the creature's hit points and Fortitude saves drop as well. For example, suppose a shambling mound is struck by a *lightning bolt* and temporarily gains 3 points of Constitution, raising its Constitution score to 20. It now has a Constitution modifier of +5 (up from +3); thus it also gains 16 hit points and increases its Fortitude save bonus by +2. The next round, the shambling mound takes a hit from a shocking burst weapon and gains 4 more points of Constitution, giving it a Constitution score of 24 and a new Constitution bonus of +7. This modifier grants it 24 more hit points and increases its Fortitude save bonus by another +3 (for a total of 40 bonus hit points and an additional +5 bonus on Fortitude saves). After an hour, it loses those 40 extra hit points and the extra +5 bonus on Fortitude saves. The hit points are deducted from the shambling mound's current hit point total, so that loss could kill the creature if it still has a great deal of unhealed damage from the battle.

The darkmantle from the *Monster Manual* has the improved grab special attack. The description of this ability says that unless

otherwise stated, improved grab works only against opponents at least one size category smaller than the creature. This would mean that the darkmantle couldn't even grab a halfling, since nothing is mentioned about the size of the opponents in the entry.

The darkmantle's description should indeed include an exception to the general rule on opponent size for the improved grab ability. The creature can use improved grab on a creature up to two size categories larger than itself.

In the Introduction section of the *Monster Manual*, it says that a creature with no Constitution score always fails its Fortitude saving throws. Am I to suppose that the disruption property of a magic weapon or an *arrow of slaying (undead)* always causes an undead target to be instantly destroyed (no Fortitude saving throws rolled), or do undead roll Fortitude Saving throws and apply a different ability modifier in those rare cases?

The Introduction section of the *Monster Manual* actually says that creatures with no Constitution scores always fail *Constitution checks.*

Furthermore, a creature with no Constitution score is immune to any effect requiring a Fortitude save unless it also affects objects. So, for example, undead creatures are not susceptible to poison, but they can be disintegrated.

Certain weapon effects (such as disruption and slaying) do not affect objects but nevertheless force certain creatures with no Constitution scores to make Fortitude saving throws. Check the description of the effect to determine which creatures are susceptible. When a creature without a Constitution score must attempt a Fortitude save, its ability modifier is +0. See the section on nonabilities in the Introduction section of the *Monster Manual* for details.

Do the evasion and improved evasion abilities apply when a shadow dragon breathes on a character? My DM said no because the breath weapon does not deal direct hit point damage, and there is no save for half damage.

Evasion and improved evasion work anytime a character must make a Reflex save to halve an effect, including that of shadow dragon breath. Most descriptions of these abilities specifically mention saves for half damage, but that language is not intended to restrict evasion or improved evasion to effects that deal hit point damage.

At 8th level, the runecaster prestige class from the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* gains the ability to make a rune permanent until dispelled, at the same cost as making a use-activated magic item (spell level × caster level × 2,000 gp). Does this permanency provide infinite uses of a spell with an instantaneous duration, such as *cure light wounds* or *flame strike?* How does this permanency affect spells that have a duration? Does it extend the effect or just make the duration permanent? For example, if you used a permanent rune to create a *stoneskin* or *barkskin* effect, would that effect become permanent?

Only the rune is permanent—that is, it remains after it has been triggered instead of disappearing. Just like a magic item activated by command word, the rune produces its effect each time it is triggered. Thus, it does provide potentially infinite uses of a spell with an instantaneous duration. For a spells with a variable duration, the duration of the rune's effect depends on its caster level, just as it would if the same effect had been produced by any other magic item.

The descriptions of the Spring Attack and Ride-By Attack feats say the target of the attack does not get attack of opportunity against the user of the feat. So, a Medium-size target would normally only be allowed an attack of opportunity against the feat user when the feat user took the second part of his movement and left a threatened space. What if the attacker is Medium-size (5 foot reach) and the target is a Large or bigger (reach 10 feet or more). The bigger creature would normally be allowed an attack of opportunity when the feat user moved from 10 feet to 5 feet away (while he was still closing for the attack). Can the target take this attack of opportunity normally, or do these feats make the user immune to all possible attacks of opportunity from the target on the round he uses it? In the case of Ride-By Attack, does the user's mount also get immunity form the target's attacks of opportunity.

Neither feat description says your target cannot make attacks of opportunity against you. Both feats work the same way, when you use either feat and attack a foe, your movement during that turn does not trigger attacks of opportunity from that foe. Anything else you might do while your foe threatens you still provokes an attack of opportunity if it normally would.

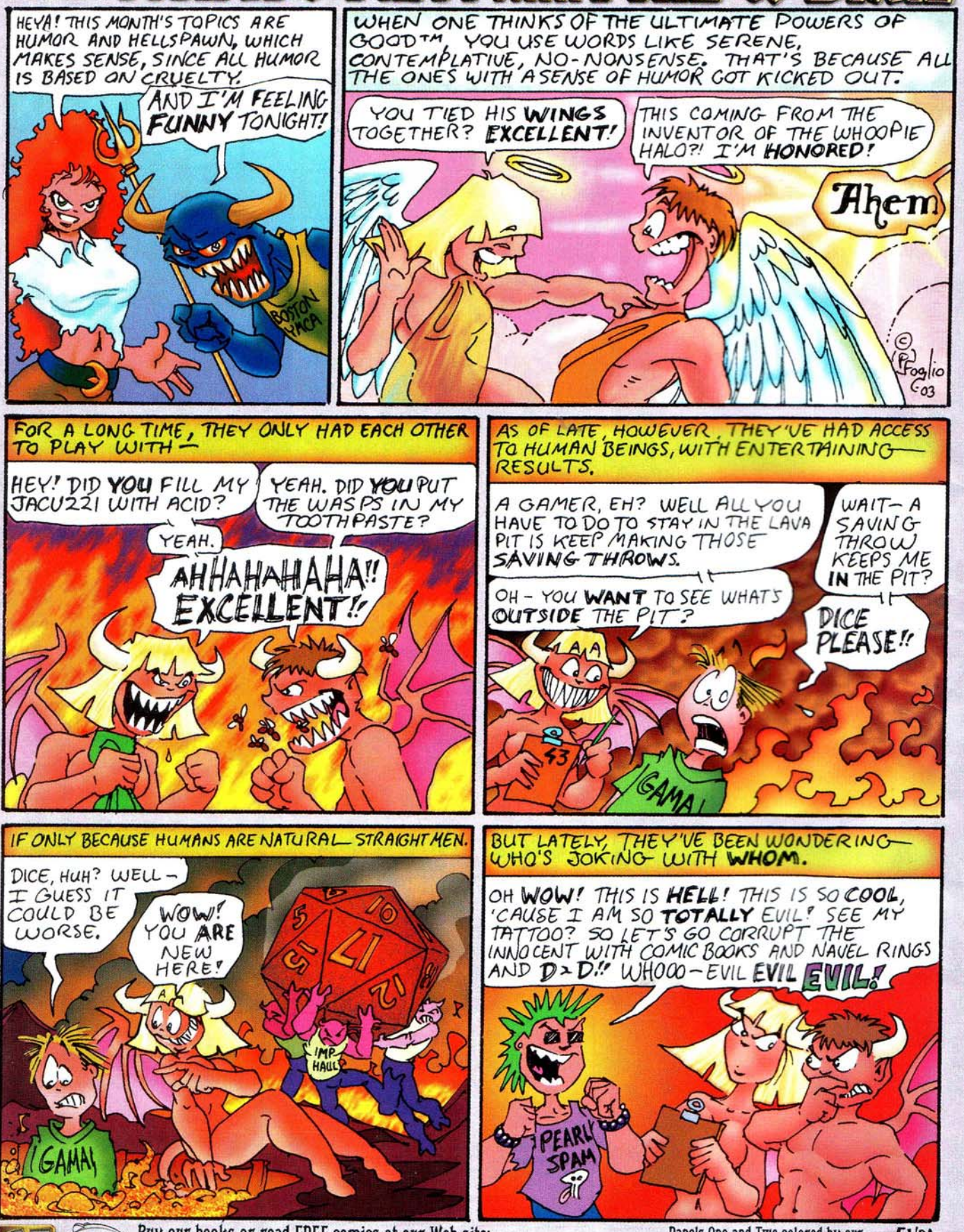
Your opponent's size or reach has no effect on how either feat works. No movement you perform during the turn when you attack the foe triggers an attack of opportunity from that foe. In the example situation, the attacker could move in and attack the larger creature and then move away again, all without provoking an attack of opportunity.

In the case of Ride-By Attack, the mount's movement also does not trigger an attack of opportunity, so long as the character with the feat is riding the mount.

Remember that it is only movement that does not trigger an attack of opportunity. If the attacker in the example moves up to the defender and casts a spell, the spell provokes an attack of opportunity. D

Email your questions to tsrsage@aol.com.

PHIL FOGLIO'S WHAT'S NEW WITH PHIL & DIXIE


HEYA! THIS MONTH'S TOPICS ARE HUMOR AND HELLSPAWN, WHICH MAKES SENSE, SINCE ALL HUMOR IS BASED ON CRUELTY.
AND I'M FEELING FUNNY TONIGHT!
BOSTON YACA
WHEN ONE THINKS OF THE ULTIMATE POWERS OF GOOD™, YOU USE WORDS LIKE SERENE, CONTEMPLATIVE, NO-NONSENSE. THAT'S BECAUSE ALL THE ONES WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR GOT KICKED OUT.
YOU TIED HIS WINGS TOGETHER? EXCELLENT!
THIS COMING FROM THE INVENTOR OF THE WHOOPIE HALO?! I'M HONORED!
Ahem
© P Foglio '03
FOR A LONG TIME, THEY ONLY HAD EACH OTHER TO PLAY WITH—
HEY! DID YOU FILL MY JACUZZI WITH ACID?
YEAH. DID YOU PUT THE WASPS IN MY TOOTHPASTE?
YEAH.
AHHAHAHAHA!! EXCELLENT!!
AS OF LATE, HOWEVER, THEY'VE HAD ACCESS TO HUMAN BEINGS, WITH ENTERTAINING— RESULTS.
A GAMER, EH? WELL ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO STAY IN THE LAVA PIT IS KEEP MAKING THOSE SAVING THROWS.
WAIT— A SAVING THROW KEEPS ME IN THE PIT?
OH - YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT'S OUTSIDE THE PIT?
DICE PLEASE!!
43
GAMA
IF ONLY BECAUSE HUMANS ARE NATURAL— STRAIGHT MEN.
DICE, HUH? WELL— I GUESS IT COULD BE WORSE.
WOW! YOU ARE NEW HERE!
IMP HAUL
GAMA
BUT LATELY, THEY'VE BEEN WONDERING— WHO'S JOKING WITH WHOM.
OH WOW! THIS IS HELL! THIS IS SO COOL, 'CAUSE I AM SO TOTALLY EVIL! SEE MY TATTOO? SO LET'S GO CORRUPT THE INNOCENT WITH COMIC BOOKS AND NAVEL RINGS AND D&D!! WHOOO— EVIL EVIL EVIL!
PEARL SPAM

Buy our books or read FREE comics at our Web site:
www.airshipbooks.com

Panels One and Two colored by our Heavenly Art Assistant Cheyenne Wright. Thanks, Cheyenne!

END!